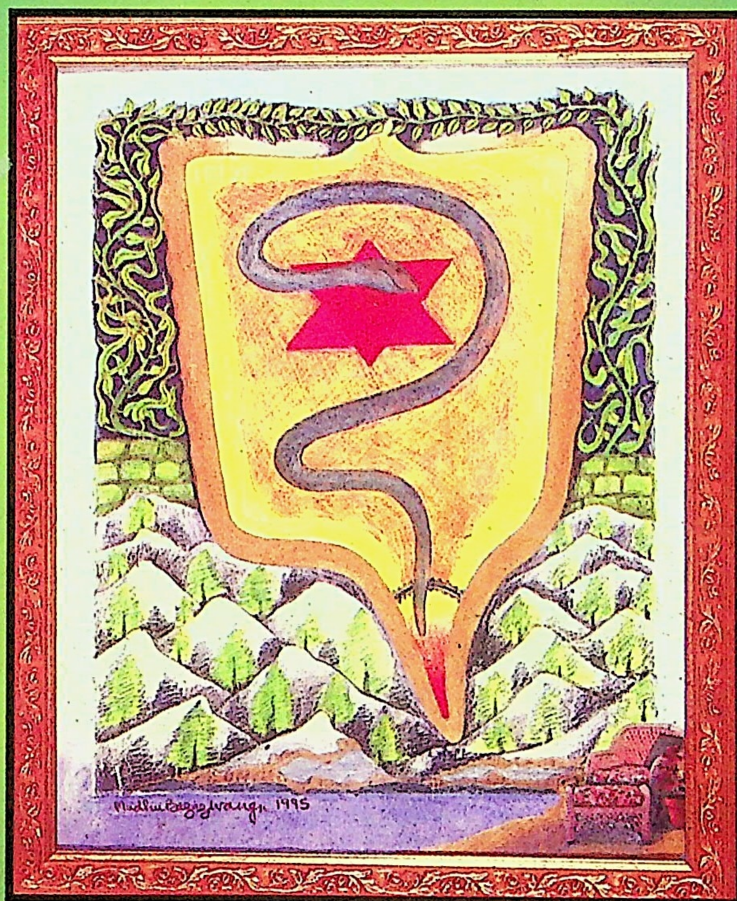
A Goddess is Born

The Emergence of Khir Bhavani in Kashmir

Madhu Bazaz Wangu





Spark Publishers






A GODDESS IS BORN

THE EMERGENCE OF KHIR BHAVANI IN KASHMIR




about the author

Dr. Madhu Bazaz Wangu was born in Srinagar, Kashmir, India. She received her Ph.D. in Religious Studies at the University of Pittsburgh, USA. She was a Post-Doctoral Fellow at the Harvard University (1989–1991) and a Research Associate at the University of Pittsburgh (1995–2000).

For the last fifteen years Dr. Wangu has taught South Asian Religions and Indian Art History at various American Universities. She has traveled around the world visiting archaeological monuments, historic temples and goddess shrines. She delivers lectures and has written several papers on the meaning of symbols and myths in Hindu and Buddhist art and religion. She has also written extensively illustrated books for young adults on *Hinduism* (1991) and *Buddhism* (1993) published by Facts On File, Inc. New York. Her book *Indian Goddess Images: Myths, Meanings and Models*, 2002 is published by Abhinav Publications, New Delhi. She has recently completed her first novel.

Currently, Dr. Wangu is working on a book, about understanding and appreciating Indian art, for the general readers. She lives in Pennsylvania, U.S.A. with her husband. They have two daughters.

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To
the Enchanting Valley of Kashmir,
her Culture and her People




preface and acknowledgments

I was born in Srinagar, the capital of the state of Jammu and Kashmir. My family permanently shifted to New Delhi when I was two years old. In New Delhi my parents would longingly reminisce about the abundant natural beauty of the valley of Kashmir. They would talk about the snow-capped Himalayan peaks which surrounded the valley, the rivers which made a confluence near the village Tulmul, and the lakes with floating gardens, house-boats and *shikara*-boats. In the tropical heat of the city they remembered the water canals, rivulets, ponds and springs and roads lined by trees—weeping willow, poplar and *chinar*.

My parents and older siblings talked about the splendor of Kashmir's changing seasons. In the winter when it snowed in the high Himalayas, sleet fell in Srinagar. The weather was dull and dreary and they wore their *pherans* and carried *Kangris*.[1] With the arrival of spring, however, they said the whole land was bedecked with blossoms of fruit trees such as almond, apple, cherry, peach and pear. Sprays of flowers like irises, pansies, violets, narcissi, crocuses and daisies burst into bloom.

They also reminisced about the Mughal gardens: Chasme Shahi, Nishat and Shalimar where they would picnic with large wicker baskets containing delicacies of local cuisine and smoking *samovars* in which hot Kashmiri tea was prepared. At Chasme Shahi they delighted in the spring blossoms and drank the refreshing spring waters. The Nishat garden had a progression of terrace gardens overlooking the Pir Panjal mountains and the languid Dal Lake. From the terraces of Nishat they could see Hari Parbat; the hill on which the temple of the goddess *Sharika* (*Durga*) was situated. The close by Shalimar garden with water cascades and fountains was another beauty spot which they frequented.

Most of all my parents were nostalgic about several days trip to the pilgrimage center of Tulmul (fig. 14 on page 233) where the local goddess *Khir Bhavani* was enshrined (fig.1 on page 214). They narrated how they would go from Srinagar to Tulmul village in a rented house-boat (a floating apartment). The boat floated gently through water canals lined by dominant weeping willows. After arrival they would take a dip in the cold sparkling water of the outer springs. They would then buy the ritual food of *Halwa* and *Lucci* (fig. 3 on page 217) and perform a ritual for the goddess in which all the senses were stimulated. The ritual was followed by a hearty picnic, which included the ritual food and other delicacies prepared earlier on the boat. The whole afternoon was spent in the vicinity of the temple paved with Baramulla stone and shaded with *chinar* trees.

We often visited the temple of *Khir Bhavani* when we went back to the valley during our summer vacations. The ritual at the temple was performed by all, young and old, men and women. The compact ritual included the lighting terracotta lamps, ringing bells, offering scented flowers, holding a sugar cone (*Kanda*) before immersing it into the spring and finally eating delicious *Lucci* and *Halwa* which were freshly prepared on the temple grounds. As a young girl the ritual had fascinated me, as an adult I started observing it more carefully. I performed the

1 Kashmiris wear woolen cloaks, *Pherans*, during cold season. Underneath the cloaks they carry *Kangris* which are wicker-work baskets, lined with terracotta bowls and contain burning coal to keep them warm.

ritual, with my husband, soon after we got married and also watched my eldest brother do it after our father's death. One thing which impressed me, as I watched the ritual repeatedly, was its vibrancy. It was not morbid in any way. Every time I performed it, it brought a sensation of joy for life. I became aware that the ritual of *Khir Bhavani* incorporated the senses of sight, hearing, smell, touch and taste; the five out of traditional six senses. I realized later that the sense of thought[2] as well was also to be invoked but it required effort and contemplation on the part of a devotee. As a child I did not think of the purpose of the ritual in which devotee's senses were stimulated. As an adult I became aware of the sensuous ritual and its meaning. Eventually through effort and contemplation, by probing deeper into the text, visual images and cultic paraphernalia of the goddess I experienced the power of her presence. In other words the spiritual experience, which the ritual pointed me (the performer-of-the-ritual) towards was perpetually present but it was upto me, as a ritual participant, to ascend to a higher level of awareness of consciousness through my body and senses.

It was not only the involved ritual, which fascinated me but also *Khir Bhavani's* iconic images, which depicted her either seated on a hexagonal throne or riding on a lion vehicle. This period in my life was followed by a Master's degree in Art History, having two daughters and immigrating to the United States.

While on a research trip to India in 1985 I came across *Khir Bhavani's* Sanskrit scripture (*Mahatmya*) titled *Shri Shri Maharajni Pradurbhava*. Its translation into English did answer some questions but it also raised many other questions. Who is goddess *Khir Bhavani*? Why is her name not mentioned in ancient Kashmiri texts? How is she related with other Kashmiri goddesses? What do her iconic images convey? These questions, which I had never seriously asked before while enjoying numerous picnics at her temple, started haunting me. I initiated investigating her cultic paraphernalia including the *Mahatmya*, and visual representations. The cult of goddess *Khir Bhavani* became the topic of my Ph.D. dissertation.[3]

Since 1989, due to the political instability, thousands of Kashmiris have left the valley of Kashmir and have settled elsewhere in India or in other countries. Owing to the political turmoil I have not visited the valley. I have been, however, in touch with expatriated Kashmiri *Pandits* in India and in the United States.

Since completing my doctoral dissertation, for more than a decade I have done further research on the goddess *Khir Bhavani* which I have incorporated in the present book. Prof. Edwin Floyd (Classics Department, University of Pittsburgh) has been most generous with his time. My sincere thanks to him for helping me translate the *Mahatmya*. Without his helpthis book could not have been written. In Kashmir, my thanks to Mohammad Yusuf Taing, for the free use of J&K Academy of Art, Culture and Languages library and to the trustees of *Shri Rupa Devi Sharada Pitha* for the permission to use their library. My profound thanks to Jagan

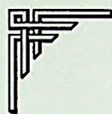
2 Hindus consider the sense of thought as the sixth sense.

3 The Ph.D. dissertation, "The Cult of *Khir Bhavani*: Study, Analysis and Interpretation of a Kashmiri Goddess" was written in 1986–88 while I was at the University of Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania, USA. Prof. Fred Clothey, Prof. Kathryn Linduff, and Prof. Juan Vasquez guided my doctoral research.

Nath Sathu and Bimla Sathu for looking after me and my daughters, with much affection, during the summer of 1985. Thanks to Ronald Miller for scanning a major part of my Ph.D. dissertation and converting it into electronic format.

Last but not least, heartfelt thanks to my husband, Manoj, for his editorial comments and suggestions, and for persuading me to write in a style which is 'reader friendly' for the general public.

Madhu B. Wangu
August, 2002




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KASHMIRI PANDITS AND THEIR RELIGIOUS TRADITIONS

The valley of Kashmir lies cradled by the outer Himalayan ranges. About 5,600 feet above sea level, the valley is 84 miles long and 20–25 miles wide. The river Jhelum (a tributary of the Sindhu river) runs through it. The valley which is a part of the state of Jammu and Kashmir is dotted with ponds, lakes and springs. Its capital, Srinagar, is linked to the plains of Jammu by the Banihal pass which further connects it to the rest of India.

The borders of Kashmir touch the neighboring countries of Pakistan and Afghanistan in the west and China in the east. The region was connected through the ancient Bharamulla–Srinagar trade route which went as far as Gandhara through the Swat valley. The Srinagar–Leh route reached China via Ladakh and Tibet. From these routes Buddhism spread to Central Asia in the west and Tibet and China in the east. Due to its geographic situation the Kashmir valley commanded and still has a position of politically strategic importance.

Kashmiri culture excelled in religious philosophy, Sanskrit literature and visual arts. The Maurya emperor Ashoka (ruled 272–232 B.C.E.)[1] and Kushana king Kanishka (circa 100 B.C.E.–100 C.E.) chose Kashmir as the place of major Buddhist Councils. Ashoka not only dedicated Buddhist *Stupas* and *Viharas*[2] but also constructed *Shiva* temples at the ancient sites of Bijibehara.[3] Before the advent of Islam in the thirteenth century Kashmir was considered the center of Buddhist and Hindu learning amongst scholars. Kashmir became a center of syncretism of different religions such as Shaivism, Buddhism, Tantrism, Islam, and more recently of Sikhism and Christianity.

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1 Ashoka was the founder of Buddhist monuments in Kashmir. He was also a fervent worshiper of Shiva. See Aurel Stein's Introduction in *Rajatarangini*. Vol. I, p.9. fn. 25.

2 *Stupas* build by Ashoka were extant at the time of Hiuen Tsang's visit to the valley in the middle of the seventh century. See S. Beal, Si-yu-ki (Tr.) *Buddhist Records of the Western World*, I, New Delhi, 1970. p. 150.

3 Kalhana, Rajatarangini: A chronicle of the Kings of Kashmir, Vols. I & II, Translation and Introduction, Aurel M. Stein, Motilal Banarasidass, Delhi, 1979 (Reprint, Org. Pub. 1900). p. 9 & 64.

Kashmiri Shaivism

Kashmir was the home of the greatest Buddhist scholars. The Buddhist monk Kumarajiva (334–413 C.E.) came from Khotan in Central Asia to Kashmir for further studies. Kashmiri teachers attracted students from China. In 631 C.E. the Chinese traveler Hsuan Tsang came to Kashmir for two years to study Buddhism. Tibet received its religion from Kashmir during the reign of Durlabhavardhana (616 C.E.). Such was the reputation of Kashmiri scholars in Buddhist learning.

The intellectual and spiritual environment of Kashmir helped foster a wide range of cults, both Buddhist and Shaiva. In the early ninth century the first Tantric Shaiva works were written. Since then Kashmiri Pandits accepted these texts as their scriptural authority. Kashmiri Shaivism was and continues to be the dominant religion of the local Hindus.

Alexis Sanderson, a scholar of Kashmiri Shaivism, tells us that there are several *Shaiva* traditions prevalent in Kashmir: The first tradition is *Shaiva-Siddhanta* in which gentle *Sadashiva* is worshiped. From this tradition develops the two-pronged *Bhairava* and *Trika* traditions. In *Bhairava* tradition god *Bhairava Svachchhananda* is dominant to his consort *Bhairavi Aghoreshwari*. In *Trika Shaivism* his relation with the goddess *Bhairavi* is reversed. She is enthroned above him as the principal recipient of worship. In yet another tradition, the *Krama* tradition, the goddess alone remains. She is no longer *Bhairava's* consort but the unitary goddess as pure power, *Shakti*.

Consortless *Sadashiva* is worshipped in his phallic form (*linga*) which is enshrined as the central deity in the community temples. In the *Bhairava* (fearful form of *Shiva*) tradition, *Bhairava* joins his consort *Bhairavi* as the chief deity. Both male and female deities constitute an important part of this sect but the worship of *Bhairava* dominates. In *Krama*[4], *Bhairavi* is internalized by an initiate. This sect involved the worship of the terrible goddess *Kali* [5] who symbolized the flow of consciousness. *Kali's*

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4 For a historical survey of the Krama system represented in the works of Kashmiri Shaiva authors see Navjivan Rastogi, *The Krama Tantrism of Kashmir*, Motilala Banarasidass, Delhi, 1979.

5 The Kashmiri Shaiva Tantrism reached its culmination with Abhinavagupta who lived in Kashmir from the middle of the 10th to the early 11th century. An ardent devotee of Shiva, Abhinavagupta brought together prominent sects of Kashmiri Shaivism into one system. The Tamilian ascetic, Madhuraja, in an eulogy to Abhinavagupta described the philosopher as still young and seated in the midst of a congregation of religious leaders, teachers and female ascetics who recognized him to be the formost preceptor of all Kashmiri Shaiva groups. See Dyczkowski's, "Introduction" in *The Doctrine of Vibration: An Analysis of the Doctrines and Practices of Kashmir Shaivism*, Motilal Banarasidass, Delhi. 1989, p.11.

worship was elevated to a level beyond outer rituals. The ritual connected with *Kali* worship was an experience, an inner process of realization through which the adept discovered his essential identity with *Kali* or his flow of consciousness. The experience of this process, through arousing the latent inner potential (*Kundalini Shakti*) and expansion of consciousness that brought it about, was the most esoteric practice of Kashmiri *Tantrism*. Krama Shaivism was not the religion of the masses. Those who dedicated themselves to this system were a minority, and considered notable scholars of the Kashmiri society.

A liberated adept of Kashmiri Shaivism is free from the opposites of body and mind. He who seeks liberation must break through the opposites to a higher state of consciousness. How did an adept reach a higher state of consciousness or arouse identity with an inner power of consciousness? By the practice of *Yogic* discipline and performance of tantric rituals. Many rituals were performed in lonely places or cremation grounds for the benefit of a few select adepts. The rituals involved eating meat, drinking wine, and performing intercourse. Participants were male and female adepts. Due to their nature these rituals were a closely guarded secret.[6]

British authors have left us abundant information about the land and the people of Kashmir in their monographs and gazetteers.[7] This genre of literature, however, contains little about the religious habits of Kashmiris. The writers merely inform us that Kashmiris either worshiped in their home shrines (*Thokur Kuth*) in absolute privacy or on the banks of the river Jhelum every morning. Flowers, mostly marigolds, milk mixed with water, rice and rock candy were used as *Puja* ingredients.

Tyndale Biscoe relates that each morning he would watch, on the bank of the river, *Pandits* cleaning their bodies after which they would sit on their mats, regulate their breath and practice meditation. Seated in this way they then invoked their deity through the recitation of mystical syllables (*Mantra*). Biscoe informs us about a temple in the palace of *Maharaja* where a stone *linga* was worshiped with milk, sugar rice and flowers. He also mentions the worship of the goddess *Kali* with blood sacrifices.

Kashmiri Pandits

The name '*Pandit*' means a learned man. Kashmiris also refer to themselves as *Bhatta*, a Prakrit word of the Sanskrit term *Bhartri* meaning doctor, the designation of a great scholar.[8]

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6 See Dyczkowski's "Introduction."

7 Such as Frederic Drew, *Jammu and Kashmir Territories*, (1876), Walter Lawrence, *The Valley of Kashmir* (1895), Tyndale Biscoe, *Kashmir in Sunlight and Shade* (1900), E.G. Hull, *Vignettes of Kashmir* (1903) and Francis Younghusband, *Kashmir*, (1909).

8 Macdonell, Arthur A., A *Practical Sanskrit Dictionary*, Oxford University Press, 1979.

Kashmiri Pandits are Hindus who claim to be the descendants of *Saraswat Brahmins*, the highest order of priestly class. Kashmiri *Brahmins* are a highly educated class. According to a 1981 census, 75% of Kashmiri Hindus were college educated. They are the most educated class in India and have occupied key government positions during the successive periods of Hindu, Muslim, Sikh, and British rule.[9] They are known for their scholastic achievements.

The politically strategic position of the Kashmir valley gave its inhabitants a character of their own. Due to their abominable historical experiences, they had a peculiar detachment from the local government as well as from the outside world. The Muslims of Kashmir were also Hindus before their conversion to Islam in the thirteenth century. The Hindus who did not convert to Islam form a strong Hindu minority at present. Thousands of Kashmiri Pandits left the valley during the unjust Mongol and Pathan rule to look for fortune elsewhere in India. During the peaceful reigns of Sultan Zain-ul-abidin, popularly known as Badshah (1420–70) and the early Mughal kings (1589–1658), however, many of them returned to the valley and worked as officials for the changing rulers.[10] They not only kept themselves abreast in Sanskrit learning but also fluent with the languages of the fluid courts. Thus they were able to keep their traditional occupation of the government service (*Karkun*) alive.

Under the harsh Pathan and Sikh rules Kashmiris were unable to keep their scholarly occupation of Sanskrit learning alive. In order to remedy the situation they originated a tradition, to train and educate the eldest son of the eldest daughter of a family in Sanskrit. The son could then be the Sanskrit scholar of the family and also function as the family priest and take care of the religious affairs. These family priests were called *Bhachibhattas*. In course of time *Karkun* and *Bhachibhattas* became two sub-castes in Kashmir.[11] The *Bhachibhattas* were considered the lesser scholars out of the two scholarly castes who were also responsible for writing the local *Mahatmyas* for the emerging shrines during the nineteenth century in Kashmir.

Hindu Brahmins were almost always vegetarians. In the Hindu tradition eating meat is linked to the lower castes. Kashmiri Brahmins, however, eat meat and fish. For non-Kashmiri *Brahmins* who are unaware of the non-vegetarian status of Kashmiri *Brahmins*, this fact comes as a shock. But Kashmiri Pandits themselves do not see their meat eating habit as polluting their high class *Brahmin* status. In fact many Kashmiri families have vegetarian as well as non-vegetarian members within the same household. The reason for this meat-eating habit is that

9 Dyczkowski Ibid. p.15.

10 Since 1989 once again thousands of Kashmiri Hindus have left the valley due to the political instability in the state.

11 Bamzai, Prithvi Nath, The History of Kashmir, Metropolitan Book Company, New Delhi, 1962. pp.17–18.

the day-to-day lives of Kashmiris are strongly influenced by the Tantric way of life in which eating meat is not polluting but part of a sacred ritual.

The Temple of *Khir Bhavani*

All sources of water are considered sacred by Kashmiri Pandits due to their religious and economic significance especially natural springs (*Nagas*) which are believed to be inhabited by ancient serpent deities (also known as *Nagas*). Water not only cleans physically but through ritual, it also becomes a spiritual cleansing agent. Water also, owing to its fertilizing qualities, symbolizes fecundity and growth. The water has economic function because the valley is rich in water sources such as rivers, lakes, canals, and ponds. The water sources are utilized for cultivation, transportation and dwelling.

The Kashmir valley is dotted with shallow ponds fed by natural springs (*Naga*). One such *Naga* is located in the Tulmul village situated about fourteen miles northeast of the Kashmir's capital Srinagar (fig. 14, page 233). At the end of the nineteenth century a temple was built in which the goddess *Maharajni Khir Bhavani* was enshrined. This temple has become quite popular. Her cultic paraphernalia reflects the amalgamation of the folk deities *Nagas* and *Pisachas* (Demons); the indigenous deities *Bhairava* and his wife *Bhairavi* (fearful forms of *Shiva* and *Shakti* respectively); and the Vaishnava god *Rama*, his wife *Sita* and their devotee *Hanuman*.

The temple of *Khir Bhavani*, has since become a pilgrimage center. (figs. 1, 2A & 2B, pages 214–216) The goddess is highly venerated by indigenous as well as expatriated Kashmiri *Pandits* around the world. Her Sanskrit scripture (*Mahatmya*), titled *Shri Shri Maharajni Pradurbhava* was published for the general public in 1981.[12] The scripture includes an iconic image, a *Yantra* (mystical diagram, fig. 12 on page 225) and *Mantra* (sacred syllable) of the goddess *Khir Bhavani*.

The *Mahatmya* narrates her myths and legends. It extols her attributes and characteristics, eulogizes her pilgrimage center and prescribes the rites to be observed by pilgrims, while they visit her temple. It is used as a handbook by the local priests (*purohits*) who also work as guides

12 I decided to use this text for my study and analysis because it was the one used by devotees in the valley. There are more than one hundred *Mahatmya* manuscripts in the royal Dogri library of Raghunatha Temple at Jammu which are dedicated to 'newly' emerged goddesses. In addition to *Maharajni Khir Bhavani* at Tulmul, the other Kashmiri goddesses are *Sharika Devi* at Hari Parbat, *Tripurasundari* in Kulgam, *Trisandhya* in Anantanaga, *Jwalamukhi* in Pulwama, *Sharada* in Teethwal (now in Pakistan), *Shaliputri* at Baramulla, and *Bhadrakali* in Handwara. See S. L. Shali, *Kashmir: History and Archaeology Through the Ages*, Indus Publishing Company, New Delhi. 1993. pp. 102–103.

of the pilgrimage center. They recite verses from these sacred books for the benefit of the pilgrims.

Mahatmyas are products of '...that particularly Hindu structure of consciousness which is pluralistic and polycentric, but which at any one time, against a vivid and variegated backdrop, brings but one center, one deity, one sacred city, or one temple in sharp focus for adoration and praise.'[13]

I spent the summer of 1985 in Srinagar, visiting the temple of *Khir Bhavani* often. At that time I was able to obtain a printed copy of her Sanskrit *Mahatmya* the one read by her devotees. The *Mahatmya* also includes, incomplete and sometimes inaccurate, English and Hindi translations. I translated the *Mahatmya* in 1986-87 in its entirety. I photographed the Tulmul temple and its vicinity (figs. 2A, 2B, 3 & 4 on pages 221–223), a manuscript painting depicting iconic image of the goddess (fig. 5 on page 224), a pen and ink drawing (fig. 6 on page 225), and wood block prints (figs. 7 & 10 on page 226 & 229) depicting the goddess. Later, I was able to procure a poster and a drawing of the serpent manifestation of the goddess (figs. 11 & 13 on pages 230 & 232).

Methodology

This book is a study and analysis of the diverse textual and visual material about the goddess *Khir Bhavani*. It also includes discussion and interpretation of her mythic and symbolic meanings. Following Mircea Eliade[14] I have used all kinds of evidence in order to understand and reveal the historic reasons of the appearance of her cult.

A thorough researcher must study the textual and visual evidence, as well as social, political and economic history of the people about whom the research is being done. Best way to study religion, Milton Singer writes, is to research in the areas of humanities as well as social sciences. '...the greatest intellectual and aesthetic achievements of (a) culture...are stored in "texts" of various kinds—oral, written, inscribed, carved and painted....'[15]

Due to the diversity of the raw data each chapter in the book needed a different approach. Emphasis had to be on the content rather than on methodology. The best and the healthiest approach seemed to be what Wendy Doniger has called 'the Tool Box Approach'. She recommends that the researcher should carry about a wide range of tools (methodologies) and reach for the right one at the right time.[16] This approach seemed to be the appropriate one for the present book.

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13 See Diana L. Eck, *Banaras City of Light*, Princeton University Press, 1982. Preface xiv.

14 See Mircea Eliade, Patterns in Comparative Religions, New American Library, 1958, p.7.

15 Milton Singer, *When a Tradition Modernizes*, University of Chicago Press, 1972, p.40.

16 Wendy O'Flaherty, *Androgens and other Mythical Beasts*, University of Chicago Press, 1980.

The *Mahatmya* and the representations made their meanings clear on their own terms. It did not make sense to fit the myth or icons into a methodological structure. A pluralistic approach was found to be the most healthy in the study of the goddess *Khir Bhavani*. The translation and analysis of the goddess's *Mahatmya* required one set of tools, the interpretation of the iconic images needed very different tools, and the study of the goddess's cultic paraphernalia demanded yet the third set. A single minded approach would have been disadvantageous. I have furnished an original analysis for each chapter using different approaches.

The first chapter of this book discusses the political, social and economic circumstances of the valley of Kashmir during the nineteenth century. Particular focus is placed on the end of the century when the cult of the goddess *Khir Bhavani* emerged, gradually gaining momentum so much so that at the beginning of the present century she was regarded as the most cherished goddess of Kashmiri *Pandits*.

The second chapter is divided into two parts. The first part includes the transliteration, corrected version of transliteration, a word by word English translation, and a free flowing English translation of the First Rendering and the Second Rendering of the myth and the Homage to the goddess. The second part includes a synopsis and analysis of the two renderings of the myth.

The third chapter interprets the iconic representations of *Khir Bhavani*. Some of these representations are a century old and some other quite recent. Special emphasis is placed on those iconic motifs which have been replaced. The historical reasons for the iconic transformation have been discussed.

In the fourth chapter the cultic paraphernalia of the goddess is discussed including her *Naga* (spring), *Yantra* (mystical diagram), and *Mantra* (sacred syllables). It reveals her nature and links her with Kashmiri Shaiva tradition, the reason she appeals to the feelings and thoughts of her devotees. The uniqueness of her persona brings into sharp focus the fact that Hindu goddesses cannot be stereotyped. They are grounded in the local region of their origin and they express the ethos and the worldview of the indigenous people.

As a result of this study I discovered that *Khir Bhavani* is a newly emerged goddess and is rooted in Tantric tradition. This bewildered my family and friends. I also conversed with many native and expatriated Kashmiris regarding *Khir Bhavani*. They think the goddess has been enshrined at Tulmul Spring from the very beginning (*ille tempore*). They are unacquainted with her historic beginnings and unaware of the meaning of her myths and icons. Moreover, most Kashmiris are uninformed about how the goddess reflects Kashmiri ethos such as emphasis on self-discipline, self-advancement, inclination towards mobility, and a general sense of *joie de vivre*.

Unraveling the goddess *Khir Bhavani* through the pages of this book has brought me immense joy and has made me understand some of my own peculiarities as a Kashmiri. I decided to publish this book to share my joy and peculiarity with other Kashmiris. It will enthrall the readers especially expatriated Kashmiris who, at times, feel nostalgic about the pilgrimage center of *Khir Bhavani*.

chapter

1

A HISTORICAL PERSPECTIVE

The Emergence of the Cult of *Khir Bhavani*

There are no historical records of the existence of a goddess named *Khir Bhavani* until the last quarter of the nineteenth century. The name *Khir Bhavani* does not appear either in *Nilmata Purana* (c.5th–6th C.E.) or in *Rajatarangini* (c.11th C.E.). The epithet, however, is mentioned in Walter Lawrence's gazetteer written in 1895 and in the *Introduction* to Aurel Stein's translation of Kalhana's *Rajatarangini* (1900 C.E.). The appellation *Khir Bhavani* ("the one born from milk and rice dessert") must have been given to the goddess after the ritual of offering the milk and rice dessert (*Khir*) was well established at her island shrine at Tulmul village reasonably in 1887 (fig. 14 on page 233).

The beginnings of the sect of *Khir Bhavani* are rooted in local legends. The people of Tulmul village used to pay homage to a natural spring which was surrounded by marshes. As late as 1848 they would cross the marshes by walking over reeds growing in the swamp.[1] The legend has it that the curiosity about the spring spread farther when the village mystic, Pandit Govind Joo Gadru, had a vision of the goddess who manifested herself as a serpent. The devout *Brahmin* carried a vessel of milk, arranged a boat, rowed through the marshes of Tulmul and upon reaching the sacred spot to which the serpent/spring goddess had led him, slowly poured out the milk. Soon afterward, another village wise man, by the name of Krishna Taplu, envisioned a goddess who lead him to the same holy spot. As time passed some local legends related to the manifestation of the goddess as a spring (*Naga*) and as a serpent (*Naga* as well) were circulated throughout the valley. The holy site came to be known as *Tulmul Naga*.[2]

The hierophany of the sacred spring gained popularity beginning from the last quarter of the nineteenth century. Within the next fifty years the *Tulmul Naga*'s reputation, in which

1 Koul, Samsar Chand. *Khir Bhavani Spring*, Utpal Publications, 1954. p.8.

2 Ibid. Koul, p.10.

Khir Bhavani was enshrined, grew from a locally known sacred place to the most important pilgrimage center in the vicinity of Srinagar. The temple was maintained by the Dogri Royal Trust.

In 1886 Walter Lawrence noted, '(P)erhaps the most sacred place in Kashmir is the spring of *Khir Bhavani*.' Aurel Stein writing in 1900 said, 'the large spring of *Tulamulya* is sacred to *Maharajni* . . . and is held in great veneration by the *Brahmin* population of Srinagar.' By the 1920's a small marble shrine was constructed in the shape of an island in the middle of the sacred spring, furnished with a metal railing and its surroundings paved with Baramulla stone.

Khir Bhavani having the form of water (*Jala-rupi*) and serpent (*Naga-rupi*) was regarded as the virgin and vegetarian goddess partly created from the political, social and economic flux of the time and partly from its evolving myths. In this regard Fred Clothey, a Historian of Religion makes some significant observations:

> Religion . . . is a creative language of the human spirit. Its expressions are microcosmic of the human condition . . . People's perception of the divine often reflects the whole range of human experience: the struggle to come to terms not only with the givens of geographical, political, economic and social reality but also what is understood to be "more than" these.[3]

What was the condition of Kashmiris during the nineteenth century? What were their geographical, political, economic and social realities which resulted in the emergence of a divinity which reflected their experiences? What happened from approximately from 1880's to 1930's that brought about a radical yet sweeping change in the valley of Kashmir?

Mythological and Historical Background of the Valley of Kashmir

Regional mythical accounts, based on semi-historical events, give much information about the Kashmiri people and their land. According to the earliest local *Sanskrit* text *Nilmata Purana*[4], Mother Kashmir (*Maaj Kashir*) was once a lake hundreds of feet deep. The water-born demon (*Jalobhava*) resided in that lake until the time *Vishnu* assumed the form of a boar (*Varaha*), killed the demon, and struck the mountain at *Varaha-mulla* (*Baramulla*) boring an opening in it through which the river could flow. The water of the lake rushed out and the valley was freed of the demon. Thus was born the valley of Kashmir. In this myth the land and its mother aspect is conflated and land is believed to represent the goddess.

The *Mahatmya Sharikaparichchheda*, in praise of a local goddess *Sharika*, gives its own version of the genesis of the valley. It states that the demon *Jalobhava* was creating havoc among people and gods. The gods implored goddess *Sharika* to deliver them from the

3 Clothey, Fred "Theogony & the Legitimation of Power: Some Clues from the Aiyappan Cult." 1978, p.5.

4 Ved Kumari, *Nilmata Purana* Vol. I & II, J & K Academy of Art, Culture, and Languages, Srinagar. 1968. pp.16–23.

oppression of the demon. She took the form of a *Maina* bird (*Haer* in Kashmiri vernacular) and 'took a pebble in her beak and dropped it over the spot where the demon was situated. The pebble grew into a gigantic hill and the demon got crushed under its weight.'[5] The hill is locally popular as the *Haer Parbat*, the Hill of the *Haer*. The goddess *Sharika* is a local manifestation of the pan-Indian goddess *Durga*.

The valley is believed to be the body of Goddess. *Nilmata Purana* states that the goddesses *Lakshmi* and *Uma* manifested themselves in the valley as the rivers *Jhelum* (locally known as *Vitasta*) and *Sindh*, to purify the land. All sources of water are considered sacred by Kashmiris. In fact, natural ponds as well as serpents (both called *Nagas* in the Kashmiri language) are regarded with reverence.

As early as the ninth century worship of *Shakti* and *Shiva* in the form of *Bhairavi* and *Bhairava* became widespread in Kashmir.[6] This was the time during which Vasugupta founded the school of Kashmiri Shaivism. The school was influenced by Buddhism and Yoga/Samkhya thought. Abhinavagupta, the tenth century *Tantric* philosopher, emphasized the centrality of the goddess *Shakti/Kali*. This religious philosophy locally inspired queens, female saints and goddesses in Kashmir.[7]

The eleventh century Kashmiri historian Kalhana, in the historical compendium *Rajatarangini*, informs us that Kashmir's ancient *Shaiva* culture was influenced by Buddhism, Vaishnavism, Tantrism and folk and tribal cults such as *Nagas* and *Pisachas*. Kalhana makes specific allusions to many esoteric *Tantric* goddesses, saying that it was a common practice to erect a circle for the mother goddesses (*Yogini* or *Matrika chakra*) in conjunction with Shaiva shrines. Stones with carvings of mystical diagrams (*Shri chakra*) for goddess worship are still of great significance to local Kashmiri goddesses such as *Sharika, Maharajni Khir Bhavani, Jwalamukhi* and others.[8]

5 In addition to the *Hari Parbat Pitha* (pilgrimage place), the other goddess *Pithas* in Kashmir are *Maharajni* at Tulmul, *Tripurasundari* in Kulgam, *Trisandhya* in Anantanaga, *Jwalamukhi* in Pulwama, *Sharada* in Teethwal (now in Pakistan), *Shaliputri* at Baramulla, and *Bhadrakali* in Handwara. See S. L. Shali, *Kashmir: History and Archaeology Through the Ages*, Indus Publishing Company, New Delhi. 1993. pp. 102–103.

6 See Mark S.G. Dyczkowski's "Introduction" and K.C. Pandey's *Abhinavagupta*.

7 See Prem Nath Bazaz, *Daughters of the Vitasta: A History of Kashmiri Women from Early Times to the Present Day*, Pamposh Publications, New Delhi, India. 1959. pp.1–21.

8 Shali. Ibid.1993, p.103. Shali informs us that the worship of *Matrikas* is an important pre-marriage ritual such as *Yagnopavit* and *Divgon* (or *Devigana* meaning a group of *Matrikas*). Eight Khir-filled earthenware dishes are set aside in the name of *Saptamatrikas* which include *Brahmani, Maheshwari, Kumari, Vaishnavi, Varahi, Indrani, Chamunda* and the eighth *Yogeshwari*. The eight dishes are then presented to elderly women related to the son or daughter for whom the ritual is performed. This ritual is rooted in ancient tradition and is evident of the widespread cult of *Matrikas* as folk goddesses.

Furthermore, Kalhana informs us that the ancient pilgrimage center of *Sharada* (local manifestation of *Saraswati*) was evidently one of the most important sacred centers of Kashmir. Situated at the confluence of the rivers *Madhumati* and *Krishnaganga*, the *Sharada Pitha* (pilgrimage place of the goddess *Sharada*) was famous far beyond its limits as early as the eleventh century. Alberuni, the Arab traveler, mentions an image of the goddess *Sharada* (now in Teethwal, Pakistan) as one of the most famous idols of the Kashmiri Hindus. He writes that during the reign of Lalitaditya, a king of Bengal came to Kashmir under the pretext of visiting the shrine of *Sharada*. In reality he wanted to avenge the murder of his king by Lalitaditya. Whatever the historical value of the story, it is clear that the reference to the icon of *Sharada* would not have been made if it was not famous far beyond the limits of Kashmir. Moreover, Abu-l-Fazl's sixteenth century account of the pilgrimage center of *Sharada* describes it to be the temple of both *Sharada* and *Durga*, regarded in great veneration.[9]

By the nineteenth century *Sharada Pitha* was almost unknown to the Kashmiri Pandits. Politically disturbed conditions during the later Pathan, Mughal and Sikh rules had much to do with the neglect into which the worship of the shrine of the goddess *Sharada* and such similar temples had fallen. Political circumstances, combined with the natural difficulty of access to these temples, caused the development of a series of substitutes for the ancient pilgrimage shrines within the valley and its vicinity. The new centers were approachable on foot or by boat.

Mystic Saints of Kashmir

Hindu mystics and Sufi saints were held in high esteem by Kashmiris. From the fourteenth to the eighteenth centuries, the period during which Kashmir was under Muslim rule, the local saints fulfilled spiritual need. The Kashmiris visited the shrines of the saints and believed that a visit would secure the object of their wishes.[10] The most well-known and pioneering mystic who lived during the politically and socially troubled times of the fourteenth century was *Lalleshwari*, a female devotional saint.[11]

Lalleshwari, was born in 1320, a time of political turmoil between Kashmiri Hindus and Muslims. Due to her ideas, however, she was acclaimed by both religious communities as their mother. She was considered the preeminent *Yogini*. Her syncretic poems merged Kashmiri Shaivism and *Sufi* mysticism. While Hindus call her *Lalleshwari* or Grandma *Lalla* (*Lalla Ded*),

9 Kalhana's *Rajatarangini*.

10 Lawrence, Walter, The Valley of Kashmir, Kesar Pub., Kashmir 1967 (1st Pub. 1895).

11 See Bhaskaracharya's *Lalla Vakyani*, Research Department Srinagar, 1925; Pandit Anand Kaul, *Lalla Yogeshwari*, The Mercantile Press, Lahore, 1942; and Coleman Barks (Tr.), *Lalla: Naked Song*, Maypop Books, 1992.

Muslims fondly remember her as mother Lalla (*Lalla Moj*). She studied with *Brahmin gurus* and *Sufi* saints and was a practitioner of *Tantric Yoga*. According to a legend, after *Lalla*'s death there was a dispute between Hindus and Muslims. While the Hindus wanted to cremate her body, the Muslims wanted to bury it. However, when the covering was removed the only thing left was a cluster of flowers. A legend tells us that during her old age she lived in a state of eternal bliss. She wrote:

> I searched Everywhere for the Bliss and wearied myself in vain;
> I found it was very hard for anyone to reach at the Hidden Knowledge;
> then I started deep thinking and meditating and lo, I arrived near the abode of Nectar.
> Strange it is though the filled jars of truth are within everyone...
> yet no one cares to drink from them
>
> This world is neither good nor bad;
> It is the individual approach which makes it either one or the other.
> For fools and vain people it is like a hot frying-pan,
> but for self-controlled and balanced yogis it is a source of great knowledge
> which has to be (only) gained by the constant efforts at self-realization.[12]

The tradition of the female saints was kept alive by *Rupa Bhavani* (1624–1720) also known as *Alakeshwari* ('lady with the locks of hair'). *Rupa* was a follower of *Lalleshwari*. She believed that different religions were different ways through which the ultimate reality can be known.[13]

Female as well as male saints such as *Lalleshwari*, *Rupa Bhavani*, *Nund Rishi* and others were a great solace to the Kashmiri masses. Through their comforting words and sometimes even by their active intercession with the court or governors on behalf of the people, the saints helped reduce the pitch of fury caused by many oppressive and unscrupulous rulers. Kashmiris were called the saint worshippers by many foreign travelers.[14]

Tantrism was prevalent in the valley from the eleventh century onwards but as the religious sect was esoteric in nature (the secret rituals involved the performance of sex and the consumption of alcohol, meat and fish) only the initiates were familiar with its rituals. '*Tantrism* was more accessible and revived during the eighteenth century, as is evident by the works of *Tantric* scholars such as Ananta Shaktipada and Shivopadhyaya. 'In depth, subtlety and maturity Shivopadhyaya sometimes reminds us of the best masters and pre-supposes some acquaintance with the system on the part of the reader,' writes Rastogi.[15] This suggests that

12 Bazaz. Ibid. *Daughters of the Vitasta*, 1959, pp.123–138.

13 See T.N. Dhar, Life, Teachings and Philosophy of Rupa Bhavani, 1977.

14 Bamzai, Ibid., 1962, p.501.

15 Rastogi, Ibid., 1979, pp.225–226.

there were enough readers for whom the *Tantric* scholars were writing and that the readers were familiar with *Tantrism*. Religious devotion at the grassroots level was towards *Bhairava* and *Bhairavi*, the fearful forms of Shiva and Parvati.

Alexis Sanderson[16] describes the three major *Shaiva* traditions of Kashmir: The first tradition is an orthodox dualistic *Shaiva-Siddhanta* tradition, in which the mild, consortless *Sadashiva* is worshiped. From this tradition develops the two-pronged second tradition. In the one *Bhairava* tradition he is dominant as *Bhairava Svachchhananda* and joins the goddess *Bhairavi Aghoreshwari*. In the other traditon, *Trika Shaivism*, his relation with the goddess *Bhairavi* is reversed. She is enthroned above *Bhairava* as the principal recipient of worship. In yet another traditon known as *Krama* tradition, the goddess *Shakti* alone remains. *Shakti* is no longer *Shiva Bhairava's* consort but the unitary goddess as pure power.

The religious traditions of nineteenth-century Kashmir originated from Tantric Shaiva tradition in which goddesses are powerful. Kashmiri *Pandits* worship local goddesses such as *Maharajni Khir Bhavani* at Tulmul, *Sharika* at Hari Parbat, *Tripurasundari* at Kulgam, *Jwalamukhi* at Pulwama, *Bhadrakali* at Handwara and such other goddesses who are embedded in this tradition.

Kashmir Under Pathan and Sikh Rule

Under the reign of just rulers the beauty of the valley had inspired great writers, philosophers, poets and craftsmen but under the suppression of tyrannical kings, the Kashmiris suffered miserably. The Kashmiri historian Prem Nath Bazaz writes:

> Barring that part of early Kashmir history about which adequate information is not available, the story of Kashmiri people is nothing but a melancholy tale of perpetual misgovernment by monarchs and their underlings. We may open any book of chronicles written by the sons of the soil from Kalhana in 1149 A.D. to Hassan in 1893, we cannot help lamenting that the poor people never enjoyed even a century of continuous peace. It is true there have appeared illustrious and celebrated rulers who made people prosperous and happy but such periods were like brief sunshine in the dreary cold winter of maladministration spreading over hundreds of years.[17]

The peoples of Kashmir had suffered considerable miseries at the hands of foreign rulers. In the middle of the eighteenth century when Kashmir was politically weak it was easy for the

16 Sanderson, Alexis., "Purity and Power among the Brahmins of Kashmir" in *The Category of the Person*, Cambridge University Press, London. 1985. pp. 200–201.

17 Bazaz, Prem Nath, History of Struggle for Freedom in Kashmir, Kashmir Publishing Company, 1951. p.2.

Pathans to declare themselves to be its conquerors. Their despotic reign may be called the darkest chapter in the annals of the valley.

For the Pathan rulers the target of torture were the Pandits, Shia Muslims and the Bomba tribes of the valley. Governor Asad Khan, writes Bazaz, used to tie up the Pandits with rope in grass sacks and sink them in the Dal Lake. 'As an amusement, a pitcher filled with ordure would be placed on the Pandits' head and then pelted with stones till it broke, the unfortunate victim being blinded with filth.'[18]

A couplet about the Pathan governor is still known locally: 'these stone-hearted people thought no more of cutting heads than of plucking flowers' (*Sar buridah pesh sangin dilan qul chidan ast*).[19]

In 1819 C.E. the Sikh ruler Maharaja Ranjit Singh succeeded in annexing the valley to his expanding empire. Kashmiris pinned great hopes on the Sikh rule. It was with an intense relief that the common people, especially peasants, anticipated the downfall of the evil rule of the Pathans as they had been cruelly and mercilessly fleeced by the governors. There was, however, no change in the system of running the state, nor did any relief come. Kashmiri hopes were destroyed. Another Kashmiri historian P.N. Bamzai writes:

> The valley was ruled by hard and rough governors appointed by Sikh Maharaja stationed at Lahore. During the twenty-seven years of Sikh rule the officials were preoccupied with military expeditions and could devote very little time and thought to ameliorating the sad condition of the people. Taxation was heavy and the treatment was harsh. Religious edifices were seized and used as godown for military equipment.[20]

In 1822 William Moorecraft who arrived in Kashmir to collect political, geographic and military information for the British government in India, wrote:

> The village we stopped was held deserted and the few inhabitants that remained wore the semblance of extreme wretchedness. Without some relief or change of system, it seems probable that this part of the country will soon be without inhabitants.

Summing up his view he later added:

> The Sikh seem to look upon Kashmiris as little better than cattle. The murder of a native by a Sikh is punished by a fine to the government of sixteen to twenty rupees (about 50 cents), of which four rupees are paid to the family of the deceased if he was a Hindu and two if he was a Mohammadan.[21]

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18 Bazaz, Prem Nath, *Kashmir in Crucible*, Pamposh Publications, New Delhi, 1967, p.9.

19 Ibid., Bazaz, 1951, p. 112.

20 P. N. Bamzai : 1962, p.573.

21 Bazaz. Ibid., 1967, p.10.

In the October of 1832 a heavy snow fall before the rice harvested destroyed the entire crop which resulted in a severe famine.

> Thousands of people died and thousands emigrated to the southern state of Punjab. The population was reduced from eight lakh (800,000 people) to two lakh (200,000 people). The governor did not make any effort whatsoever to either import food grains for the starving people or to persuade hoarders to bring out the grain and sell it at a reasonable price. He passed his days drinking and let his worthless officers take care of the state.[22]

On March 16, 1846, Kashmir with its peoples, rivers, springs, forests and mountains was sold for the sum of seventy-five lakh rupees ($150,000) to a Dogri Rajput chieftain from the Jammu plains named Gulab Singh in exchange for the help he had rendered to the British government during their war with the Sikhs. 'It was an unfair and unjust act devoid of all sense of fairness on the part of the British,' wrote Bazaz. Many years later the Kashmiri poet Iqbal wrote his feelings about this transaction:

Their fields, their crops, their streams
Even the peasants in the vale
They sold, they sold all, alas
How cheap was the sale.[23]

During the early Dogri rule (1840's–1850's) the forced labor (*Begar*) continued, taxes were exorbitant and Kashmiris deserved no higher status than that of serfs. Gulab Singh's administration was stern and primitive.[24]

Kashmir Under Dogri Rule (1846–1925)

Gulab Singh assisted Ranjit Singh, the Sikh Maharaja of Punjab, with unprecedented valor in many military expeditions. Impressed by Gulab Singh's achievement, Ranjit Singh gave him the plains of Jammu 'in farm', conferred on him the title of '*Maharaja*' and installed him on the 'throne' of Jammu in 1822. From then onwards Maharaja Gulab Singh became the hereditary ruler of the Dogri inhabitants of the Jammu region. He thus established the present state of Jammu and Kashmir, bringing together two religiously distinct ethnic communities. This was a military triumph for the Maharaja.

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22 Ibid. Bamzai, 1962, p. 22.

23 As quoted in Kamudi, 1952.

24 Various historians have different perspectives about the character of the early Dogri rule. Whereas P. N. Bazaz and P. N. Bamzai are highly critical of the rule of Gulab Singh, K.M. Pannikar has high praise for him and regards Gulab Singh as one of the most remarkable men of nineteenth century India. The truth seems to lie somewhere in the middle. A more balanced account is expressed by Jyoti Bhushan Das Gupta. He calls the reign of Gulab often oppressive but stable in which stability was reinforced by the long shadow of British power in India (1968) p.43 & 47.

Military and religion were matters of deep concern to Gulab Singh. He was a devotee of *Rama*. His devotion resulted in the construction of Rama temples at Jammu dedicated to the *Vaishnava* deities *Rama*, his wife *Sita*, his brother *Lakshman*, and the supreme devotee *Hanuman*.

When Maharaja Gulab Singh added the valley of Kashmir to his territory, he discovered that the religious bend of the people of the valley was toward *Shaiva* deities. While following the dead body of a loved one traveling towards the cremation grounds, the Kashmiri Hindus did not chant, "*Hey Rama! Hey Rama!*" but instead "*Shiva Shiva Shambhu! Shiva Shiva Shambhu!*"[25] *Shambhu* being an epithet for *Shiva*.

During this time Kashmiri *Tantrism* was revived by scholars such as Sivopadhyaya and others.[26] There were enough readers familiar with the *Tantric* Shaiva cult of *Bhairava/Bhairavi* for whom the scholars were writing. The German Indologist George Buhler informs us that the *Maharaja* disapproved of the *Shakta* or *Tantric* rituals and ceremonies. Therefore Kashmiris performed the rituals secretly.[27]

Gulab Singh's son Ranbir Singh (r.1856–85) brought many educational, judicial, and health related reforms to the valley such as granting the Christian Missionary Society (C.M.S.) of London some land for constructing two general hospitals. He was also personally concerned with the revival of spiritual awareness through religious education in his kingdom of Jammu and Kashmir. His desire was to resuscitate the study of orthodox *Sanskrit* scriptures, which had nearly ceased to exist in Kashmir. He organized a vigorous campaign for the collection of old texts. Ancient texts were purchased from as far as Bengal and Banaras and copies made by the *Bhashabhattas* or professional scribes.[28]

Ranbir Singh tried to improve the condition of the people and make improvements to the administration of the state but under his regime progress was extremely slow. His officers, who used harsh treatment towards the common folk, were incapable of planning and organizing the

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25 Dogras utter the name of Rama while carrying the litter of a dead body to the cremation ground, but in Kashmir it is the name of Shiva which is uttered at such an occasion. See Tyndale Biscoe, *Kashmir in Sunlight and Shade: A Description of the Beauties of the Country, the Life, Habits, and Humor of Its inhabitants*, and an *Account of the Gradual but Steady Rebuilding of a Once Down-Trodden People*, Sagar Publication, New Delhi, 1971. (1st Pub. 1900)

26 Rastogi, Navjivan, *Krama Tantrism of Kashmir*, Vol.I, Motilal Banarasidass, New Delhi, 1979. pp.225–26.

27 Buhler, George., "Detailed Report of a Tour in Search of Sanskrit MSS made in Kashmir, Rajputana, and Central India" in Journal of the Bombay Branch of the Royal Asiatic Society of Great Britain and Ireland, Extra Number, 34A, Branch 12, Bombay. 1877, p.23.

28 In addition to pandits, the Kashmiri religious tradition was kept alive by *bhasha bhattas* and *purohits*. While pandits were serious scholars of Sanskrit texts, *bhasha bhattas* earned their livelihood as scribes. Of much lower ranks were *purohits* who worked as guides to the pilgrimage centers. Their knowledge of Sanskrit was of the "scantiest kind and their reading confined to *Mahatmyas* and devotional texts learned by heart without proper comprehension". Stein, 1894, p.383.

immense labor and extraordinary sacrifices required to remove the terrible effects of many centuries of misgovernment. His best intentions for the revival of cultural and literary traditions did not help when in 1877, due to excessive rain, the whole crop was destroyed and a famine came to the valley. The people were not prepared to meet the emergency, nor the officials capable to mitigate its effects. All the horrors of famine prevailed until 1879, when the crop proved to be a prolific one. The Maharaja lived at the mercy of nature. The effects of the famine lasted for over a decade. In 1889 Walter Lawrence, who traveled the valley inspecting villages for the settlement of the land for British government, noticed that 'there was hardly a village where I did not see deserted houses and abandoned fields, the owners of which had perished in the great famine of 1878.'

According to Sir Francis Younghusband, the English author of the book *Kashmir*:

> In the early (eighteen) sixties cultivation was decreasing, the people were wretchedly poor, there were few men of respectable, none of wealthy appearance. When the calamity of the great famine fell upon the people in 1877–79 the administration proved incapable of protecting them; thousands died of starvation and dead bodies could be seen by heaps lying on the roadside; whole villages lay in ruins and the city of Srinagar was half destroyed.[29]

The ghastly famine darkened the latter part of Maharaja Ranbir Singh's life. He died in 1885 and was succeeded by his eldest son, Maharaja Pratap Singh, whose accession is considered as a landmark in the history of modern Kashmir.

The condition of the Kashmiri people until the end of the nineteenth century was utterly miserable. They had faced an extreme socio-political situation. Then, by a combination of circumstances, a change started taking place which ushered in an era of progress and advancement. It mobilized Kashmiri men as well as women, and it gave birth to a resurgent movement which in the course of time swept the land and awakened the community. Under the reign of Maharaja Pratap Singh (1885–1925) with the help of the Imperial government and a tremendous amount of missionary work, several reforms were carried out.

By the time Pratap Singh came to the throne of Kashmir, Dogras had ruled Kashmir for forty years and had enjoyed pleasures and luxuries which the beautiful valley offered. Yet only few improvements were effected in the material or moral conditions of the people. Maharaja Pratap Singh did not become the sovereign master of Kashmir but was to rule the valley under the supervision of the British administration.

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29 Younghusband, Sir Francis, *Kashmir*, A. & C. Black Ltd., London, 1917 (1st Pub. 1909).

The Reign of Maharaja Pratap Singh and The Christian Missionary Society

Soon after giving away the valley of Kashmir to the Dogras as a reward in 1846, the British government in India realized their mistake. The valley was not only a breathtaking vacation place but also strategically the most important state, situated as it was at, the meeting place of the three large empires: the Afghan, the Chinese and the Indian. The British administrators as well as the inquisitive Europeans were keen on visiting the valley but the Dogra rulers were suspicious of the British and did not want them to enter the valley freely. However, a few visitors were allowed in after the personal approval of the Maharaja was obtained. Gulab Singh as well as Ranbir Singh had refused the proposal to appoint a British Resident in the Valley. Finally, during the rule of Pratap Singh, a Resident was reluctantly appointed. Pratap Singh was to rule the valley under British supervision. The Resident was to oversee the political complications which might arise on the borders of the cease-fire line and the administrative matters which might cause problems on the local scene.

A few visitors who had an opportunity to visit the valley wrote some noteworthy reports of their travels. Whatever the historical significance of their reports, they brought one thing pointedly to the notice of Christian missionaries and philanthropists: in the beautiful valley of Kashmir the condition of its inhabitants was miserable. For energetic people, who desired to take up humanitarian and evangelic world, this was the place. With the result that as early as the 1850's young men and women wanted to reach the valley and dedicate their lives to uplifting the downtrodden people. After much perseverance, in 1863 a branch of the Christian Missionary Society of London (C.M.S.) was established in Kashmir. This set-up eventually functioned to the benefit of the Kashmiri people. Many socio-political and economic changes were made which deeply affected the religious outlook and social status of Kashmiris.

A cursory survey was made into various social areas by the missionaries after which it was obvious that the first priority was to improve the deteriorated health of the Kashmiri people. It was decided that a hospital should be founded where sick people could be given care and medical advice and supplied with free medicine. During the Sikh and early Dogra rule the sick or wounded had to fend for themselves or seek the aid of *Hakims* (Muslim medicine man) or *Vaids* (Hindu herbalist) the large majority of whom were not only unskilled and unqualified but also miserably poor themselves. Bazaz narrates the details of the beginning of the health related endeavor:

> In 1865 the C.M.S. of London allocated a substantial sum for medical work to be done in the valley. Dr. Elmslie was debuted to found a hospital. The Dogra administration was suspicious. Although the physician was granted a house in which to reside, he was refused the spacious house for conducting his duties, although this had been agreed to in an arrangement made previously. He took refuge under shady Chinar trees and examined his patients giving them advice and free medicine. The next year he was refused even a residential house but Doctor Elmslie refused to give up. He pitched a tent and used it for both out-patients and in-patients.

During that year he treated 33,065 sick men, women and children. For the next four seasons (for the doctor was allowed into the valley only during visiting summer months), sick people flocked to him and soon allopathic medicine and Christian missionaries became popular in the valley. Unfortunately Dr. Elmslie died in 1872 without seeing the fruit to his labor.[30]

In 1874, Maharaja Ranbir Singh, impressed with the work of the doctors, granted an ideal site and all expenses to the mission for the construction of a hospital. A building was erected for the Mission Hospital which became a place of refuge for the poverty-stricken, sick and suffering people of the valley.

A movement for the rehabilitation of the physical and moral health of the people received an impetus when the Church of England Women's (*Zanana*) Missionary Society decided to lend a helping hand in the work in Kashmir. A hospital exclusively for women was established at Rainavari. It rendered a great service to the masses and earned as much fame as the Mission Hospital.

All the social reforms brought about a sweeping radical change in the valley which was the first of its kind. The social progress made as the result of this social and political change impacted the Kashmiri people deeply. Their condition was no longer the way it used to be. Although changes were being made in all the major social areas—medical, educational, and judicial, Kashmiris were still unsure of their future. This was a time of liminality, of being 'between and betwixt.' This new self-consciousness was reflected in their worship and devotion.

The Saint Worshipers

Kashmiris are known as saint worshippers (*Pir Parast*). Saints such as *Rupa Bhavani*, *Lalleshwari*, *Nund Rishi* and others were well-known locally. Compassionate and merciful saints have had a congenial relationship with the indigenous people. At times, Kashmiri saints mediated with governing body, whether officials or even kings on behalf of the common folk. In the last quarter of the nineteenth century, a foreign queen received the prestigious status of a saint.

Through the C.M.S. of the valley, the British empire had gained much popularity in Kashmir. Queen Victoria was proclaimed the empress of India from 1876 to 1901. After the Mutiny of Meerut in 1857 she wrote, 'India should belong to *me*.' She became absorbed in Indian life as India became absorbed into hers. She never visited India but studied Hindustani and ate Indian curries and exclaimed that at last she was in 'real contact' with the people of India.[31]

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30 Bazaz, Ibid., 1959, p.208.

31 Warwick, Clark & Embree, Ainslie. The Last Empire, An Aperture Book, 1976, p.1.

In India she was perceived as devoted to her domestic responsibility, for she had nine children and appeared to be an example of love, devotion and patriotism. As for the queen, she:

> '...took her relationship to her new subjects very seriously and contrived, by some esoteric magic of her own, to convey her concern to them. At any rate the new regime was more personal, something which Indians liked. (Within a few decades) there grew an extraordinary attachment and even reverence for the queen's person which littered Indian cities with her statues...Without apparent effort Victoria had captured the mystique of Akbar.'[32]

The Kashmiri people, in particular, had a special devotion towards her. She was seen as the source of the C.M.S. of London which had made genuine efforts for the betterment of the people of the valley in so many areas. By the end of the nineteenth century she was elevated to the rank of a female saint. A favorite expression of Kashmiri peasants was that they would make themselves heard as far as London (by the queen) if an official or village headman oppressed them.[33]

The attitude of Kashmiris towards the queen developed as the result of the hard labor and social reforms done by the missionaries. The queen was seen as the fountainhead of the missionaries who were partly responsible for medical, educational and land reforms in the valley. She inspired in the minds of Kashmiris an image of a powerful and nurturing mother whose power had brought some relief to their miseries and oppression caused by centuries of misrule. It was a matter of transferring the devotion to a more recent living sacred paradigm. Her elaborately framed images were created and were believed to be worthy of keeping at home altars (*Thokur Kuth*). Her emergence as a kind of a 'local' saint justified age old suffering and made sense out of the pain. It also gave religious justification and sanctity to the changes of the times.

Within a few decades the tremendous homage Kashmiris developed towards queen Victoria was partly because of the social reforms made by the C.M.S. and partly because of the Kashmiri cultural milieu in which not only the Great Goddess *Shakti* was supreme but goddesses and female saints were also highly venerated.

By the 1880's photographs of the queen with elaborately handmade borders were available in the bazaars of Srinagar. Writing in 1886, W.H. Lawrence reported that an interesting fact about the Hindus of Kashmir was that they worshipped the likeness of Her Majesty the Queen Empress (*Maharajni*). This persisted not only among the Pandits of the city but also among village Hindus.[34]

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32 Spear, Percival., A History of India, Vol. II, Penguin Books, 1965, p.148.

33 Biscoe.Ibid., 1900.

34 Lawrence, p. 300. 1985. One such photograph of a Tantric Yogi, Kailash Kaul, in which the border is decorated with an original design by the artist Naran Mutzagar, is reproduced in "Naran Mutzgar" by Ratan Parimoo in The *India Magazine*, October 1985.

The growing popularity of the medical work encouraged the C.M.S. to pay attention to the staggering problem of mass illiteracy. The earlier Dogra government had been as indifferent towards mass education as they had been towards the physical welfare of the people. Until 1880 not a single school was established where all could receive education. Children of upper and some middle-class Hindus and Muslims were educated by *Purohits* and *Mullahs* respectively. There was no proper management to oversee these self-appointed teachers. No aid was available to these religious schools and students learnt only what their teachers were capable of teaching.

The Christian missionaries drew up a proposal for education in Kashmir and forwarded it to C.M.S. of London. The proposal was promptly approved and funds were granted. Many years had to be spent in dispelling the distrust of the local people before a primary school could be started. Finally in 1881, Rev. J.H. Knowles gathered a number of boys who displayed an eagerness to learn but wanted to make sure that they would not be converted to Christianity. Within a decade the primary school was raised to the level of high school and the number of students was well into the hundreds. Tyndale Biscoe joined the school in 1891 to assist Knowles. The graduates of the Mission school were talking a different language, so to speak. An intellectual change in the minds of the educated class was slowly influencing other areas of their lives.

The success that was achieved in the medical and educational enterprises encouraged the missionaries to work towards improving women's literacy. This was completely unheard of in Kashmir. Even the suggestion to educate girls was sure to arouse suspicion and invite trouble. After considerable work and patience, however, a girls' school was established adjacent to the thriving boys' school.[35]

Vaishnava God *Rama* in the Valley of The *Tantric* Goddess

Early on, Ranbir Singh had realized that a religious mandate from the Kashmiri *Shaiva* laity for the *Vaishnava* god *Rama* would lead to better socio-political control of the people. The local people celebrated festivals dedicated to *Shiva Bhairava* (*Khechi Mavas*) and wedding of *Shiva* and *Parvati* (*Herath*). The Vaishnava festivals of *Dashehera* (the defeat and destruction of demon *Ravana* by god *Rama*) and *Diwali* (the return of *Rama* and *Sita* after his victory) were known to Kashmiris but were not passionately celebrated.

The *Maharaja* introduced the *Rama* cult to the masses by incorporating *Rama* festivals and mythology into the local religious calendar. One noteworthy religious festival introduced into the valley at the beginning of Ranbir Singh's reign was the *Baldev* (appellation of Rama) festival. The *Maharaja* declared a two-day national holiday for this particular festival. On one

35 Bazaz, Ibid., 1959, pp.211–12.

of the two days the king along with his royal entourage visited Rambagh garden, where all the subjects were invited to worship the royal deities *Rama, Sita* and *Lakshman*.[36] Another new festival for Kashmiris was the festival of *Dashehera*, the victory of *Rama* over the demon king *Ravana*, which was celebrated with much pomp and show.[37] Ranbir Singh selectively utilized the advantageous characteristics of religious nature for political purposes.

Dissemination of the Vaishnava beliefs of the ruling class is eloquently expressed in the Sanskrit *Mahatmya* of the *Tantric* goddess *Khir Bhavani*. In the first rendering of her origin myth the name *Rama* is unimportant. In the second rendering, however, *Rama* takes over the role of the protagonist as discussed in Chapter 2. Through the syncretization with Vaishnavism, meat eating and alcohol drinking *Tantric* goddess not only becomes vegetarian but also incorporates Vaishnava gods in her cult.

Besides establishing new religious festivals, the *Maharaja* also constructed *Rama* temples in which imposing images of *Hanuman* were installed.[38] In western Himalayan kingdoms, wherever the festivals, images, and/or temples of the ideal god/king *Rama* were established, 'they (were) set up by *maharajas* whose main policy had been the unification and centralization of their respective state,' writes the art historian Hermann Goetz.[39]

During the reign of *Maharaja* Pratap Singh (1885–1925), several important financial, judicial, educational, civil, and social reforms were established. The missionaries continued to take personal interest in uplifting the people of the valley with the result that the masses developed respect and gratitude for the English people. The presence of the English under the Dogri regime was changing the political, social and cultural outlook of the people.

The early twentieth century saw the construction of a Hindu college which was subsequently renamed Sri Pratap Singh College in honor of the Maharaja. The first class

36 Buhler. Ibid., 1877, p. 20.

37 The festival of Dashehera was not celebrated in the valley of Kashmir before the Dogra rule and has much subdued since then, but during the Dogra epoch this day of the triumph of Rama was indeed celebrated with much joy. See Pandit Anand Kaul's description of Dashehera festival in *The Kashmiri Pandit*, Thaker & Spink, 1924.

38 Hanuman as a deity enshrined in temples was introduced into the valley during the Dogra rule. His name is not mentioned in any of the local texts. Even the nineteenth century British Indologist, Aurel Stein, who describes almost all the ancient and traditional sacred places of Kashmir, does not mention the name Hanuman. And yet at present Kashmir is dotted with Hanuman temples. As Hanuman is the mythic devotee par excellence of Rama, he must have seemed an appropriate symbol for ushering in the Rama cult to the valley. After all, were not the great devotees of Rama (i.e., the Dogra rulers) importing the cultus of Rama from Jammu the way Hanuman ushered the goddess from the island of Lanka into the Valley of Kashmir?

39 Goetz, Hermann. *Studies in the History of Art of Kashmir and the Indian Himalayas*, Otto Harrawitz, Wiesbaden, 1969, p.120.

graduated in 1912 and was hailed as the herald of a new age by the Kashmiris. By the 1920's the number of college graduates had multiplied and some of them proceeded abroad for further education.

By the second decade of the twentieth century important reforms were set up. Practically every district in the state was stabilized. Forced labor (*Begar*) was abolished and payment in cash was substituted for payment in kind for the benefit of the people. Revenue was evaluated on the basis of fertility produce and possibility of irrigation. Land settlement and revenue assessment changed the outlook of the peasants and gave them new hope and incentive to work.

For the fair distribution of food the Food Control Department was established. The department handled, collected and distributed food grains through a newly devised card system. Each family had a card and each member listed on the card received forty two pounds of rice each month. Well-designed granaries were erected at Srinagar for one year's ample supply of grain to be used in the case of emergencies. This system worked admirably well.[40]

Flood protection measures were adopted which not only prevented floods but subsequent famine and epidemics. This resulted in a rapid increase in population. With the improvement of healthcare, infant mortality rates were reduced to a record low.

In a land so predominantly agricultural and with such limited scope for increase in cultivable area the need for improvement in horticulture arose. French experts in horticulture were asked to teach ways to improve the quality of indigenous fruits and to introduce new varieties. Kashmir's best orchards slowly gained a reputation for producing delicate fruits of different varieties.

Until the year 1880 there were no paved roads for transportation in the valley. Wheeled carts made from the trunks of trees were used for carrying crops from the fields to the market. Construction of proper roads from Srinagar to Lahore, a distance of 200 miles, was planned and completed in 1890. Another road over the Banihal pass connecting Kashmir with Jammu was constructed in 1915. Roads and streets were widened and paved and latrines were built.

With the building of roads tourism increased, thereby benefiting small-scale industries, boatsmen, traders, and laborers. There was a tremendous revival in all areas of human endeavor—health, education, agriculture and industry. These sweeping radical changes affected the minds of Kashmiris deeply, both physically and mentally.

During the reign of Pratap Singh, with the tremendous amount of hard work by the missionaries and the interest of the British government, the valley of Kashmir was transformed from a medieval to a near-modern city.

40 Bamzai, Ibid., 1962, p.641.

Political and Socio-Economic Changes and their Impact

From the seventeenth to the eighteenth centuries Kashmiris had been governed by tyrannical rulers. By the turn of the twentieth century, however, Kashmiri people were healthier, better educated, and led much better lives. Their self-perception and assurance had improved.

Awareness in one area led to awareness in other spheres. Slowly, Kashmiris also became aware of their own religious traditions. Esoteric *Tantric* worship was however confined to a specialized class of *Yogis* such as Saint Swami Kailash (Kalas Kaul).[41] The rituals and worship of *Bhairava* and *Bhairavi* were prevalent but their meanings were forgotten. The young generation of Kashmiris, educated in Christian Mission schools and colleges, did not view the images of *Bhairava*, with his body smeared with the ashes of cremated bodies, disheveled hair, and snake-encircled limbs and the dancing *Bhairavi* wearing a necklace of human skulls and snakes, worthy of veneration. The westernized Kashmiris were not able to make connections with their ancient religious ideas and imagery.

The major religious festivals of Kashmiris, tied to the mythology of *Bhairava* and *Bhairavi* were continued to be celebrated. The veneration of the *Nagas* and *Pisachas* also continued uninterrupted. Under the changed circumstances, however, old deities had lost their sanction and authority. New deities were desperately needed. There was an atmosphere of uncertainty. Old deities did not seem to work anymore. But as Hindus were free to reinterpret their religious concepts and symbols and recreate sacred visual imagery, new myths and symbols emerged from their creative imagination.

In the village of Tulmul, where the rivers Vitasta and Sindhu meet is a natural spring. Swami Vivekananda (1863–1902) is believed to have spent seven days near the spring towards the closing years of his life. The legend says that during this time when Vivekananda reproached the goddess for not protecting her devotees from Muslim invasion she appeared to him, in her manifestation as *Kali*. She rebuked the Swami for his inability to realize that was just a Divine Play.

Each day Vivekananda worshiped the goddess *Kali* and performed his daily ritual near the spring. He sanctified the place by meditating and offering milk and rice dessert (*Khir*) everyday to an unmarried daughter of the local priest.[42] Legend has it that the swami thus initiated the tradition of offering *Khir* to the Spring. The tradition continues to this day. Now, instead of offering dessert to a virgin girl, the *Khir* is immersed into the sacred spring—the manifested body of the vegetarian goddess. Although the goddess is known by many names such as *Rajni, Maharajni, Tripurasundari, Bhuvaneshwari*, the ritual might have initiated the new appellation, *Khir Bhavani* (the one who has originated from milk and rice dessert).

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41 Parimoo: Ibid., 1985, p.64.

42 Majumdar, R.C., *Vivekananda*, New Delhi, 1965, 1967, p.276. A virgin girl is considered an emanation of the Great Goddess *Devi* and her unpolluted female power, *Shakti*.

The work of missionaries with the collaboration of the Maharaja Pratap Singh had borne fruit. The emotions of gratitude were expressed in the cult of a new deity *Maharajni Khir Bhavani*. The representation of Queen Victoria ('the Great Empress') was a bridge in order to revive the ancient deities and link them to the newly emerged *Maharajni* (the Great Empress) *Khir Bhavani*. The worthy persona of the Queen Empress by itself did not fit into the 'picture they had of the way things in sheer actuality were.'[43] But if the 'new' goddess was superimposed over the images of the 'old' goddesses of learning and knowledge such as *Sharada*, *Sharika*, *Tripurasundari* or saints such as *Lalleshwari* and *Rupa Bhavani*, it would work. A new goddess was raised from an ancient tradition.

In Hindu theogony...each deity reflects not solely a particular cultural moment but an ongoing tradition that by incarnation or transference of symbols and meanings derives its authority from a mythic or historic original moment. However "new" the god, he is mythologically "from the beginning", an affirmation which affords a devotee a sense of personhood and participation...all "new" or local deities eventually are ascribed some association with the theological mainstream.[44]

The sacred spring of Tulmul village was believed to be the manifested body of the serpent goddess. Her names *Maharajni* (the Great Empress) and *Khir Bhavani* were added to the Kashmiri pantheon of deities at this time. The superimposition and synthesis of the different historical and mythological feminine figures and their attributes crystallized and resulted into a complex multifaceted goddess *Khir Bhavani*, integrating a wide range of experiences and aspirations of the Kashmiri people.

Khir Bhavani with her attributes of virginity, vegetarianism, protection and nourishment, expressed archetypal motherhood and purity *par excellence*. For educated Kashmiri Pandits this reflected an enhanced self-image and gave them confidence. The changes brought about in the lives of the Kashmiris through the reforms were sanctified and understood through the complex symbol of the goddess. Through *Khir Bhavani*'s esoteric and dark aspects, the old deities were tranformed into the positive and creative attributes of the new goddess, and the sufferings and miseries of an earlier era were fitted into a comprehensible pattern. Through this goddess the Kashmiri people re-established ties with the past. As a group they found some fundamental perceptions mirrored and many needs met.

In the following chapters an extensive study of the goddess *Maharajni Khir Bhavani*'s *Mahatmya*, her visual representations and the island temple at Tulmul are analyzed and their meanings interpreted. An attempt is made to understand the way in which unusual historical situations and human conditions are expressed in Hinduism through various media, both textual and visual.

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43 Geertz, Clifford, *The Interpretation of Cultures*, Basic Books, Inc., Publishers, N.Y., 1973.

44 Clothey, Ibid., 1978, p.2.

chapter

2

THE SCRIPTURE

Creation of a Syncretic Goddess

Two Sanskrit scriptures (*Mahatmyas*) are devoted to the goddess *Maharajni Khir Bhavani*: *Shri Shri Maharajni Pradurbhava* and *Rajni Mahatmya*. The present chapter focuses on the study of the former text.

In the *Mahatmya Shri Shri Maharajni Pradurbhava* many local and major Hindu myths are told in the context of Kashmir in general and Tulmul in particular. Some myths are religious in nature and some quasi-historical. Therein are described her hagiography, sacred syllables (*Mantra*), geometric diagram (*Yantra*) and iconic image (*Murti*). The text reflects the metaphysical, social and political underpinnings of local beliefs and practices cherished by the Kashmiri Hindus.

The *Mahatmya* is believed to be the last chapter of *Bhringisha Samhita*, a *Purana*. This links it to the *Pauranic* literature written for the masses.[1] By designating *Maharajni Pradurbhava* as a portion of a *Bhringisha Samhita* its religious value and antiquity is authenticated which raises its authority. *Bhringisha Samhita* text, however, is lost so the question whether the *Mahatmya* was a chapter of the ancient text cannot be verified.

Much emphasis is put on the benefit of listening and reciting these epic like poems. 'Merit can be gained by mere listening of the *Mahatmya*' is a claim made over and over again in the present text.

Shri Shri Maharajni Pradurbhava is one hundred and ninety one verse (*Shloka*) long poem. It contains a hymn, two different renderings of the origin myth, a homage, a prayer, a *Mantra*,

1 *Puranas* played a major role in bringing popular *Hinduism* to the masses, especially to the low castes and to women. Whereas women and members of the lower castes were not entitled to hear the *Vedas*, they were allowed to hear and recite *Puranas*. Each *Purana* was dedicated to a single deity such as *Vishnu*, *Shiva* and *Devi*. The two epics, *Mahabharata* and *Ramayana* belong to the same genre as the *Pauranic* literature and were compiled between 300 B.C.E.–300 C.E.

a *Yantra* and a *Murti*. A hymn, two renderings, a homage and other contents seem to form a group of concentric circles in which a mythic tapestry is created by embroidering the old leitmotifs with the new forms. The common center of the three circles is the goddess *Maharajni Khir Bhavani*. The Homage details her iconographical form and explains her ritual. It is the most sacred and powerful part of the *Mahatmya*.

The *Mahatmya* starts with the hymn, followed by the First and the Second Rendering and ends with the Homage. The Homage forms the innermost circle which reflects all her grandeur.

The First Rendering discusses the ascend of the goddess from Lanka, the island kingdom South of India (the realm of demons—*Nagas*, *Pisachas* and *Rakshasas*), to the northern valley of Kashmir (the abode of the divine beings). She manifests herself as water and as serpent. In the Second Rendering deliberate efforts are made to interweave the goddess with the main characters of the epic *Ramayana*. Some portions of the Hindu epic is superimposed on the local Kashmiri myth. Out of the two renderings of the myth the shorter First Rendering makes no mention of the epic, in the longer Second Rendering strong connections are made with *Uttarakanda* of *Ramayana*. *Rama* is abruptly introduced and for a short while becomes husband of *Khir Bhavani*. At this time her character is superimposed on that of *Rama*'s wife *Sita*. Strong and ascetic *Hanuman* remains quintessential devotee even when he takes *Khir Bhavani* from Lanka to Tulmul. *Ravana*, the villain of the great epic, although wise souled, is nevertheless, an ignorant and confused character who is striving to achieve Bhairava-hood. By borrowing from the epic *Ramayana* the short account of the myth in the First Rendering gradually acquires interesting new overtones until it establishes a parallel with the ancient epic in the Second Rendering.

The Homage to the goddess, the final section of the *Mahatmya*, is a conversation between *Bhairavi* and her husband *Bhairava*. In this section *Bhairava* explains to his wife why he worships *Khir Bhavani*, contemplates on her image and geometric diagram and recites her mystical syllables. Having narrated his reasons for *Khir Bhavani*'s spiritual power he asks her to follow his example. He guides her through the ritual of worship.

The *Mahatmya* recommends the readers to perform the ritual the way *Bhairavi* performed it with the guidance of *Bhairava* if they want to fulfill their desires. They must contemplate on the image (*Murti*) of *Khir Bhavani*, focus on her diagram (*Yantra*) and recite her sacred syllables (*Mantra*). These three ingredients: image, diagram and syllables form an integral part of the cultic paraphernalia of the goddess.

The printed copy of *Maharajni Pradurbhava Mahatmya*, which is read by the general public, is not written in classical or even correct and consistent Sanskrit language. There seem to be two probable reasons for this seeming lack of the correct knowledge of the language. First, the majority of the local *Purohits* were not Sanskrit scholars. They learnt Sanskrit by listening and memorizing from the gurus who themselves were no better than their pupils. A simple error

of spelling is illustrated in (*Sl.* 50, Sec. Ren.) where the meaningless *susreni* is printed, instead of *sussroni*, which makes good sense in the passage. In the same verse *avahami* is printed, but both meter and grammar necessitate *avahayami*. Moreover some parts of the text strongly suggest the goddess' link with the esoteric *Tantric* cult. Because of the secretive nature of the cult some verses (*Sl.* 13–17, Homage) are deliberately composed in an abstruse style and in ungrammatical language. Attempts are made to present the text so as to discourage outsiders from scrutinizing the text too critically. At times the meaning becomes incomprehensible. Because of such reasons the writers do not exhibit mastery of the language. At times verses are of inferior quality and at several instances incomplete and incorrect.

Notes on Transliteration and Translation

Almost all the verses of the *Mahatmya Shri Shri Maharajni Pradurbhava* are composed in the manner of a typical Sanskrit verse (*Shloka*) having two lines. One line has two quarter-verses (*Padas*) and one *Pada* has four syllables. Besides this regular type of *shloka*, a special kind of *shloka* is used which has four lines and each line has fourteen syllables. This *shloka* is called *Vasanta Tilaka*. For instance the first five *shlokas* of the hymn to the goddess exemplify this kind of verse. Another kind of *shloka* has four lines but each line consists of only eleven syllables. This kind of verse is called *Tristubh* and tends to be used wherever a significant idea has to be conveyed. For example, *Mantroddhar* (*Sl.* 14 & 36, the Homage) are written in *Tristubh*.

Another kind of meter of a *shloka* is exhibited in the Vedic verse called *Gayatri Mantra*. This verse was originally composed in praise of the Vedic goddess *Gayatri* and has three lines, each line having eight syllables. In the present *Mahatmya* a verse accompanying *Yantra* of the goddess is based on the *Gayatri Mantra*. Obviously the title *Gayatri* has been replaced by *Khir Bhavani*.

Some *shlokas* appear more than once. For example, the second *shloka*, a *Vasanta Tilaka* of the hymn, is repeated as the eighteenth *shloka* in the Second Rendering of the myth. In the third line of the verse the composer has used fifteen syllables instead of the usual fourteen. As this irregularity is repeated in both the verses (*Sl.* 2 the Hymn & *Sl.* 18, Sec. Ren.) it might have originated from the original manuscript.

I have made changes when a word does not make any grammatical sense without the change. In case the original word does have a meaning but does not make sense in the translated idea, the original word is given in the first transliteration and the changed word into the second transliteration; the meaning of the corrected work is used in the translation. For example, in the verse 14, the Second Rendering *Yace* is printed and seems clearly intended, since it fits the meter. It does not, however, fit the context, which seems to demand a trisyllabic form, *Yacase* "you wish" instead the first person form *Yace* "I wish".

There are occasional instances of confused printing. A notable instance is verse 27, the homage where *d*, towards the beginning of the second line is written with both *i* and either *i*

or *o* an impossible situation in Devanagari script. Moreover, there are various instances of false *sandhi*. For example, in verse 69, the Second Rendering *varsaih* should appear without the *visarga*, and in verse 70, the Second Rendering *sarvaih* should appear with final *r* instead of *visarga*. Some violations of normal *sandhi* have been corrected in the second transliteration, but a few have been left as in the printed text, since no ambiguity in interpretation is involved in these cases.

There are a few speculations on the source of these errors but no definite answers. On the whole, there seem to be more mistakes toward the end. This could be due to haste in copying the original text which was lent out by the owner only for a few hours. Alternatively, though, it might be the case that the composition of the original *Mahatmya* was also constrained by time, and therefore the writer became less careful towards the end.

In the following pages I have translated the whole *Mahatmya* including the *hymn*, the First Rendering, the Second Rendering and the Homage. Each verse includes the Sanskrit *shloka*, a word by word transliteration, a corrected second transliteration in which words have been changed, divided and corrected (based on standard *Sanskrit* as given in Monier Williams English-Sanskrit dictionary), the literal English translation and finally a free-flowing English translation. I have not translated the *hymn* in free-flowing English because it did not necessitate such a translation. It made sense in literal English translation.

THE TEXT OF THE *MAHATMYA SHRI SHRI MAHARAJNI PRADURBHAVA*

श्री महाराज्ञी स्तुति :

Shri Maharajni Stutih[2]

(A Hymn to *Shri Maharajni*)

HYMN

1

याद्वादशार्क परिमण्डित मूर्तिरेका
सिंहासनस्थितिं मती मुरगैः वृतां च ।
देवी मनक्षगतिमीश्वरतां प्रपन्नां
तां नौमि भर्गवपुषीं परमार्थराज्ञीम् ॥

Yadvadasharka parimandita murtireka
Simhasanasthiti mati muragaih vritam cha
Devi manakshagatimishvaratam prapannam
Tam naumi bhargavapushim paramartharajnim

Ya dvadasharka-parimandita-murtir eka
Simhasanasthiti-matim uragaih vritam cha
Devi manakshagatimishvaratam prapannam
Tam naumi bhargavapushim paramartharajnim

Of whom one form is adorned with twelve rays, firm upon a seat on a lion throne, and surrounded by snakes, goddess going on without wheels, possessing Divine Power. I pay homage to her, the highest *Rajni*, of glorious form.

2 This *shloka* is written in the form of *Vasanta Tilaka*. There are four lines and each line has fourteen syllables. In the Hymn, while the first five *shlokas* are *Vasanta Tilaka*, the sixth, seventh, and fifteenth are regular *shlokas* and the rest are one line long.

2

उद्यद्दिवाकरसहस्ररुचिं त्रिनेत्रां
सिंहासनोपरिगतामुरगोपवीताम् ।
खड्गाम्बुजाढ्य कलशाममृतपात्रहस्तां
राज्ञीं भजामि विकसद्वदनारविन्दाम् ॥

Udyaddivakarasahasraruchim Trinetram
Simhasanoparigatam uragopavitam
Khangambujadhya kalashamamritapatrahastam
Rajnim bhajami vikasadvadanarabindam

Udyaddivikarasahasraruchim Trinetram
Simhasanoparigatam uragopavitam
Khangambujadhya-kalasham amritapatrahastam
Rajnim bhajami vikasadvadanarabindam

Elevated, shining like thousand suns, having three eyes, seated on the lion throne, surrounded by snakes, holding a cup, carrying sword and lotus, with an elixir container in her hands, I worship *Rajni her* face blossoming like lotus.

3

यत्पाद पङ्कजतलेऽमरमूर्धमौलि-
न्यस्तेन्द्र नीलमणिसन्ततयः पतन्ति ।
किञ्जल्क पानरत मुग्ध मधुव्रतस्त्वं
राज्ञी सदा भगवती जननीव नोऽव्यात् ॥

Yatpada pankajatalemaramurdhamauli
Nyastendra nilamanisantatayah patanti
Kinjalka panarata mugdha madhuvratasttvam
Rajni sada bhagavati jananiva novyat

Yatpada-pankajatale maramurdhamauli
Nyastendra-nilamanisantatayah patanti
Kinjalka-panarata-mugdha-madhuvratast tvam
Rajni sada, bhagavati jananiva novyat

Under the base of the lotus a multitude of dark excellent jewels are placed on the crown of an immortal head. You are devoted to the sweetness and loveliness of drinking stamina of lotus, *Rajni* like a mother may she protect us.

4

शीतांशु बालार्क कृशानु नेत्रां
चतुर्भुजामेन त्वदासनस्थाम् ।
शङ्खाब्ज शूलासिधरां महेशीं
राज्ञीं भजेऽहं तुहिनाद्रि रूपाम् ॥

Shitamshu balarka krishanu netram
Chaturbhujamena tvadasanastham
Shankhabja shulasidharam maheshim
Rajnim bhajeham tuhinadri rupam

Shitamshu balarka krishanu netram
Chaturbhujamena tvadasanastham
Shankhabja shulasidharam maheshim
Rajnim bhajeham tuhinadri rupam

Your eyes are like the moon, the newly risen sun, or fire. Having four arms you are seated on a seat, carrying conch shell, lotus, sword and trident, consort of *Mahesha*, I worship you *Rajni* in the form of mountains of snow (Himalayas).

5

देवि प्रसीद नत सौख्यकरे मृडानि
रुद्राणि रोगहरणे चतुरे प्रसीद ।
शर्वाणि सर्वजनपापहरे प्रसीद
राज्ञि प्रसीद गुणगौरि शिवे प्रसीद

Devi prasida nata saukhyakare mridani
Rudrani rogaharane chature prasida
Sharvani sarvajanapapahare prasida
Rajni prasida gunagauri Shive prasida

Devi prasida nata saukhyakare mridani
Rudrani rogaharane chature prasida
Sharvani sarvajanapapahare prasida
Rajni prasida gunagauri Shive prasida

Goddess *Mridani*, who gives devoted happiness, be gracious. *Rudrani* swift, who eliminates disease, be gracious. *Sharvani*, who destroys the sins of all the people, be gracious and *Rajni* who gives good qualities, *Shiva*, be gracious.

6 • 7

स्मृतैवान्तर्गतं पुसां हरन्ती सकलं मलम् ।
जयत्येषा महाराज्ञी भक्तानां कामदायिनी ॥

त्रिजगन्मोहिनि ईढ्ये मिहिरी भूत सद्गुणे ।
नमोस्तु ते महाराज्ञि पाहिमां शरणागतम् ॥

Smritaivantargatam pusam haranti sakalam malam
Jayatyesha Maharajni bhaktanam kamadayini
Trijaganmohini idhye mihiri bhuta sadgune
Namostu te Maharajni pahimam sharanagatam

Smritaivantargatam pusam haranti sakalam malam
Jayaty esha Maharajni bhaktanam Kamadayini
Trijaganmohini idhye-mihiri-bhuta-sadgune
Namostu te Maharajni pahi mam sharanagatam

If remembered she destroys all inward impurities of people. Victorious is that *Maharajni* who bestows wealth on her worshipers. Deluding the three worlds you are to be praised like the sun of the good qualities. Homage to you *Maharajni*, protect me who has come for your protection.

8

शेषाशेष मुखागण्यगुणे गुणगणप्रिये । नमोस्तुते ०॥

Sheshashesha mukhaganyagune gunaganapriye namostute

Sheshashesha mukhaganyagune gunaganapriye namo stu te

Both complete and incomplete, the source of innumerable best qualities, beloved, with a host of good qualities, homage to you.

9

सुरासुरनरसिद्ध वन्दनीय पदाम्बुज़े । नमोस्तुते ०॥

Surasuranarasiddha vandaniya padambuje namostute

Surasuranarasiddha-vandaniya-padambuje namo stu te

Worthy of worship by demons, non-demons, humans, seers, oh you with lotus feet, homage to you.

10

चराचर जगत्सृस्टिस्थितिसंहार कारिणि । नमोस्तुते ०॥

Charachara jagatsrististhitisamhara karini namostute

Charachara jagatsrististhitisamhara karini namo stu te

The one who creates and destroys the universe of living and non-living, homage to you.

11

भक्तकल्पलतेऽनल्प वाह्माधुर्यजितामृते । नमोस्तुते ७॥

Bhaktakalpalate nalpa vahmadhuryajitamrite namostute

Bhaktakalpalate nalpa-vahmadhury ajitamrite namo stu te

For the worshipper you are the wish yielding creeper. At the head of many vehicles, unconquerable, eternal, homage to you.

12

ब्रह्मविष्णु महेशान वन्दिते गिरिनन्दिने । नमोस्तुते ०॥

Brahmavishnu-maheshana vandite girinandine namostute

Brahmavishnu-maheshana-vandite girinandine namo stu te

Brahma, *Vishnu*, *Mahesha* all worship you. Rejoicing in the mountains, homage to you.

13

भक्तानां भीम संसार पारावार प्रतारिणि । नमोस्तुते ०॥

Bhaktanam bhima samsara paravara pratarini namostute

Bhaktanam bhima-samsara-paravara-pratarini namo stu te

You help the worshiper cross the terrible farther and nearer cycle of existence, homage to you.

14

निर्गुणे निष्क्रिये नित्ये सच्चिदानन्द रूपिणि । नमोस्तुते ०॥

Nirgune nishkriye nitye sachchidananda rupini namostute

Nirgune nishkriye nitye sachchidananda-rupini namo stu te

Beautiful, without qualities, without activity, permanent, characterized by existence, thought and bliss, homage to you.

15

राज्ञीस्तोत्रमिदं पुण्यं त्रिसन्ध्यं प्रयतः पठेत् ।
असंशय मशेषेण वशयेदखिलं जगत् ॥

Rajnistotramidam punyam trisandhyam prayatah pathet
Asamshaya masheshena vashayedakhilam jagat

Rajnistotram idam punyam trisandhyam prayatah pathet
Asamshayam asheshena vashayed akhilam jagat

Devotee should read this good *Rajni* hymn of praise three times a day. By doing so he will get possession of the whole world without doubt, entirely.

श्री महाराज्ञी–प्रादुर्भाव-विवरणम्

(भृङ्गीश -संहिता-तः)

श्री महाराज्ञी -भगवत्यै नमः

SHRI-MAHARAJNI PRADURBHAVA VIVARANAM

(*Bhringisha Samhita-Tah*)
Shri-Maharajni Bhagavatyai Namah
Exposition of the Manifestation of *Shri-Maharajni*
(From the text *Bhringisha Samhita*)
Homage to the Goddess *Shri-Maharajni*

First Rendering

1

श्री भैरवी उवाच :-

यामूर्ति-स्त्रिपुरा देव्याद्वितीया तरुणाभिधा

उपासिता राक्षसेन रावणेन महात्मना ॥१॥

Shri Bhairavi uvacha:
Yamurti-stripura devyadvitiya tarunabhidha
Upasita rakshasena ravanena mahatmana

Shri Bhairavi uvacha:
Ya murtis Tripura devya dvitiya tarunabhidha
Upasita rakshasena ravanena mahatmana

Lady *Bhairavi* said:
She, of whom the second form as the goddess is *Tripura*[3], named maiden, worshiped by the great souled demon *Ravana*[4]...

Bhairavi asked *Bhairava*, 'Who is the virgin goddess by the name of *Tripurasundari* who is worshiped by the great souled *Ravana*?

---

3 *Tripurasundari* is a Tantric goddess and also a consort of *Shiva*.

4 *Ravana*, a central character of the *Mahatmya* is the same as the villain of the epic *Ramayana*. He is the epic demon king of the island kingdom of Lanka (present country of Shri Lanka). He is depicted as a great *Yogi* but due to his deeds had acquired dark qualities. See "Uttarakanda", The *Ramayana* of Valmiki, H.P. Shastri, 1959.

2

ईशानकोणेलङ्कायां नागेऽनन्ते प्रतिष्ठिता ।
तामसी बहिरादिष्टा सा का वै वेदसत्तम ॥२॥

Ishanakonelankaya nagenante pratishthita
Tamasi bahiradishta sa ka vai vedasattama

Ishanakone Lankaya nagenante pratishthita
Tamasi bahir adishta sa ka vai vedasattama

In Lanka she was placed in the corner of *Shiva*, in an endless snake. Who is she? Designated as *Tamasi* outside. Oh, you knower of all?

Who is the *Tamasi* whom *Ravana* enshrined in Lanka? Tell me, you knower of all.

4

तामसी राजसी वापि सात्विकी वा महेश्वर

Tamasi Rajasi vapi sattviki va maheshwara

Tamasi Rajasi vapi sattviki va maheshwara

Is she of *tamasi*, *rajas* or *sattvasi* (attributes), oh *Shiva*?

Is she of *tamasi*, *rajasi* or *sattviki* nature?

3

सैव श्रुत्वा मया देव पुण्ये काश्मीर मण्डले ।
भुवनेश समीपे तु विघ्ननाशार्थमास्थिता
कलौ सत्वात्मिका देवी वैष्णवी देव दुर्लभा ॥

Saiva shrutva maya deva punye Kashmira mandale
Bhuvanesha samipe tu vighnanasharthamasthita
Kalau sattvatimika devi vaishnavi deva durlabha

Saiva shrutva maya deva punye Kashmira mandale
Bhuvanesha-samipe tu vighnanashartham asthita
Kalau sattvatimika devi vaishnavi deva-durlabha

I have heard thus *Deva* that in the sacred country of Kashmir, near *Bhuvanesha*, the goddess established herself as *Vaishnavi*[5] in *sattvika* form during the *Kaliyuga* in order to destroy all the troubles, which is even difficult for the gods.

Lord, I have heard that the goddess established herself as a vegetarian deity in *Sattvas* form during the *Kaliyuga* in the sacred country of Kashmir in order to destroy all the troubles, which is even difficult of gods.

5 *Vaishnavi* means vegetarian. Being a vegetarian goddess she is associated with the *Sattvika* quality and with purity and joy. Meat eating deities are considered as having *Tamasi* qualities destructive and filled with passion.

5

केन नीता कथं तत्र किं रूपा च प्रतिष्ठिता ।
वद सत्यं महादेव लोकानुग्रहकाम्यया

Kena nita katham tatra kim rupa cha pratishthita
Vada satyam mahadeva lokanugrahakamyaya

Kena nita katham tatra kim-rupa cha pratishthita
Vada satyam mahadeva lokanugrahakamyaya

By whom was she led? Why there? In what form was she established?
Tell me the truth Great Lord, for the sake of the people.

Who led her to Kashmir, and why, and in which form was she established there? Tell me the truth lord for the sake of your devotees.'

6

श्रृणु सुन्दरि वक्ष्येहं तरुण्याश्चरितं महत् ।
येन श्रवण मात्रेण जनः सर्वज्ञतामियात्

Shri-Bhairavah:
Shrinu sundari vakshyeham tarunyashcharitam mahat
Yena shravana matrena janah sarvajnatamiyat

Shri-Bhairavah:
Shrinu sundari vakshyeham tarunyash charitam mahat
Yena shravana-matrena janah sarvajnatam iyat

Bhairava (replied), listen oh beautiful, be satisfied, I will describe the great behavior of the maiden, by mere listening of which people gain all knowledge

***Bhairava* replied, 'Listen, I will tell you about the great virgin goddess by mere listening of which devotees gain all knowledge.**

7

पुरा पुलस्ति तनयो रावणो नाम राक्षसः ।
सुतोऽभूत्तमसा पूर्णो मदमान समन्वितः ॥

Pura pulasti tanayo ravano nama rakshasah
Suto bhuttamasa purno madamana samanvitah

Pura pulasti-tanayo ravano nama rakshasah
Suto bhut tamasa purno madamana-samanvitah

Long ago there was a descendant of Pulaste, a demon by the name of *Ravana*, fully intoxicated with pride and filled with darkness.

Long ago there lived a demon by the name of *Ravana*, a descendant of Pulasti. He was fully intoxicated with pride and darkness.

8

दशायुतानि वर्षाणि चचार दुश्चरं तपः ।
निराहारो यतप्राणः पादैकाङ्गुष्ठ संस्थितिः ॥

Dashayutani varshani chachara dushcharam tapah
Niraharo yatapranah padaikangushtha samsthitih

Dashayutani varshani chachara dushcharam tapah
Niraharo yatapranah padaikangushtha-samsthitih

Ravana decided to do a vigorous penance[6] for a hundred thousand years, without any food, controlling his breath, and standing upon the front toe of his foot.

He decided to do a vigorous penance for a hundred thousand years standing upon the front of his toe, without consuming any food and controlling his breath.

6 The epic *Ramayana* describes *Ravana* as a great devotee of *Shiva* and as a *Yogi* who did extreme penances in order to gain boons from *Brahma* and *Shiva*.

9

ईश्वराराधनं कुर्वंस्तन्मना विजितेन्द्रियः
एकदा चरतस्तस्य दुश्चरं तप ईश्वरि ॥

Ishwararadhanam kurvanstanmana vijitendriyah
Ekada charatastasya dushcharam tapa Ishwari

Ishwararadhanam kurvanstanmana vijitendriyah
Ekada charatas tasya dushcharam tapa Ishwari

Having controlled his senses by vigorous penance, he was absorbed in the worship of god. Once, while he was performing a difficult penance...

Once while he was absorbed in the worship of god by performing a difficult penance,

10

लुब्धको चर यूथं च सिंह वाराह यूथकम्
शीघ्रगं चानुदुद्राव धनुष्पाणिर्महेश्वरि ॥

Lubdhako chara yutham cha simha varaha yuthakam
Shighragam chanududrava dhanushpanir maheshwari

Lubdhako chara-yutham cha simha-varaha-yuthakam
Shighragam chanududrava dhanushpanir maheshwari

... suddenly a hunter having arrows in his hands was chasing a group of wild boars and lions running in different directions, *Maheshwari.*

he saw a hunter chasing a group of wild boars and lions who were running in different directions.

11

त्रस्तास्ते प्राणिनस्तत्र रावणाश्रममन्ततः ।
क्षोभयन्तः परंजग्मुर्नमृतालुब्धकेषुभिः ।।

Trastaste praninastatra ravanashramamantatah
Kshobhayantah paramjagmurnamritalubdhakeshubhih

Trastas te praninas tatra ravanashramam antatah
Kshobhayantah param jagmur na mrita lubdhakeshubhih

Shaking with fear, trembling for their lives, wounded but not killed by the arrows of the hunter, the animals finally entered into the hermitage of *Ravana*.

The animals were afraid and were wounded by the arrows of the hunter. In order to save their lives they entered into the hermitage of *Ravana*.

12

क्षुब्धं तमाश्रमं दृष्ट्वा रावणः सात्विकोऽपि सन् ।
जजाप जप्यं विमनः परमं तम- आश्रितः ।।

Kshubdham tamashramam drishtva ravanah sattviko pi san
Jajapa japyam vimanah paramam tama-ashritah

Kshubdham tam ashramam drishtva ravanah sattviko pi san
Jajapa japyam vimanah paramam tama ashritah

Although *Ravana* had acquired *Sattvika*[7] qualities, yet seeing his hermitage thrown into confusion, he was full of extreme darkness, and he made a disconsolate prayer.

When *Ravana* saw his hermitage disturbed, although he had acquired *Sattvika* qualities, he got very angry and made a disconsolate prayer.

7 Through vigorous penance, meditation, and recitation of sacred syllables Ravana had acquired *Sattvika gunas* which overweighed his *Tamsic gunas*.

13

एतान्वै लुब्धकान्सर्वान्प्राणिनोपि च सर्वतः ।
एकेषुणा पातयेय इति ध्यानास्पदो स्मरन् ॥

Etanvai lubdhakansarvanpraninopi cha sarvatah
Ekeshuna patayeya iti dhyanaspado smaran

Etan vai lubdhakan sarvan praninopi cha sarvatah
Ekeshuna patayeya iti dhyanaspado smaran

'I will destroy all the hunters and all the creatures with one arrow' he thought, abiding in contemplation

In contemplation he decided to destroy all the hunters and all the animals with one arrow.

14

देवदेवं महादेवं विरूपाक्षं त्रिलोचनम् ।
ध्वात्वा परम संविन्म स्तमोरूपं ददर्श सः ॥

Devadevam Mahadevam virupaksham trilochanam
Dhvatva parama samvinmastamorupam dadarsha sah

Devadevam Mahadevam virupaksham trilochanam
Dh(y)atva parama-samvinmas tamorupam dadarsha sah

Invoking the form of God of gods, the Great God having three eyes, he saw him in His Terrible Form.

He invoked the form of the great god and saw His terrible form having three eyes.

15

ततस्तं तामसं रूपं दर्शयामास सुन्दरि ।
दृष्ट्वा तु तामसं रूपं स्तुत्वा नुत्वा च भक्तितः ॥

Tatastam tamasam rupam darshayamasa sundari
drishtva tu tamasam rupam stutva nutva cha bhaktitah

Tatas tam tamasam rupam darshayamasa sundari
drishtva tu tamasam rupam stutva nutva cha bhaktitah

He had the vision of the Terrible Form of the God. Oh beautiful, having seen the Terrible Form he praised and worshiped in succession.

Having seen the vision of the terrible form, *Ravana* praised and worshiped the God of gods in succession.

16

वरं वृणीष्वीति वदंस्त्रैलोक्यं वृतवान् प्रभो ।
ततो देवेन चाज्ञप्तो भज शक्तिं च राक्षस ॥

Varam vrinishviti vadamstrailokyam vritavan prabho
Tato devena chajnapto bhaja shaktim cha rakshasa

Varam vrinishviti vadams trailokyam vritavan prabho
Tato devena chajnapto bhaja shaktim cha rakshasa

'Ask for a boon oh mighty one', he said having covered the three worlds. 'Instructed by the lord, worship *Shakti* from now on, demon'.

The God said, 'Ask for a boon but worship *Shakti* from now on mighty one.

17

तामसीं त्रिगुणातीतां देवी श्यामात्मिकां पराम् ।
तरुणी मम या शक्तिः महा पञ्चदशी परा ॥

Tamasim trigunatitam devi Shyamatmikam param
Taruni mama ya Shaktih maha panchadashi para

Tamasim trigunatitam devi Shyamatmikam param
Taruni mama ya Shaktih maha panchadashi para

My strength is that of the maiden *tamasi* surpassing the three gunas, the Great Goddess *Shyama*, having fifteen letters.

My strength is that of *Tamasi Shyama* who is beyond the three qualities and has a fifteen lettered *mantra*.

18

रजः तमः स्वरूपा सा भज तामेव रावण ।
यतो मद् ध्यान निष्ठा वै प्राणि हिंसन तत्परः ।

Rajah tamah svarupa sa bhaja tameva ravana
Yato mad dhyana nishtha vai prani himsana tatparah

Rajah tamah svarupa sa bhaja tam eva ravana
Yato mad-dhyana-nishtha vai prani-himsana-tatparah

Her form is *rajas* and *tamas*. The way you were devoted and absorbed in me when you had the destruction of living creatures in your mind, the same pay, *Ravana*, you be devoted to her.

She is both *rajas* and *tamas*. The way you were devoted to me, when you were contemplating about the destruction of the living creatures, the same way you be devoted to her.

19

त्रैलोक्यं व्रतवान् सद्यस्ततस्तामेव चाश्रय ।
आश्रिता हि महादेवी सर्वान्कामान्प्रदास्यति ॥

Trailokyam vratavan sadyastatastameva chashraya
Ashrita hi mahadevi sarvan kamanpradasyati

Trailokyam vratavan sadyas tatas tam eva chashraya
Ashrita hi mahadevi sarvan kaman pradasyati

In *Triloka* fulfilling a vow instantly is a law. Right now give devotion to the Great Goddess. She will fulfill all your desires.

In *Triloka*, it is a law to fulfill a promise. If you give devotion to the great goddess, she will fulfill all your desires.'

20

इत्युक्तो देवदेवेन चेश्वरेण महात्मना ।
जजाप तामसीं देवीं तरुणादित्य वर्चसाम् ॥
वर्षायुतं महादेवी तद्दर्शनमुपागता ।

Ityukto devadevena cheshvarena mahatmana
Jajapa tamasim devim tarunaditya varchasam
Varshayutam mahadevi taddarshanamupagata

Ity ukto devadevena cheshvarena mahatmana
Jajapa tamasim devim tarunaditya-varchasam
Varshayutam mahadevi taddarshanam upagata

Thus addressed by the God of gods, the Lord, the great soul, he prayed to the goddess *tamasi* having fresh splendor like the sun. After ten thousand years the Great Goddess appeared to him.

***Ravana* prayed to sun-like fresh splendor *Tamasi* goddess for ten thousand years and then she appeared to him.**

21

वरं वृणीष्व पुत्रेति स्कन्दस्यापि सुदुर्लभम् ।

Varam vrinishva putreti skandasyapi sudurlabham

Varam vrinishva putreti skandasyapi sudurlabham

Shyama said, 'Ask for a boon son which is even difficult for *Skanda* to obtain.

The goddess said, 'Ask for a boon son which is even difficult for *Skanda* to get.

22

ददामि ते त्रिलोक्याश्च भुंक्ष्व राज्यमकण्टकम् ।
त्रियुगं भोगसहितस्ततोऽस्मत्पार्श्वदो भव ॥

Dadami te trilokyashcha bhumkshva rajyamakantakam
Triyugam bhogasahitastato smatparshvado bhava

Dadami te trilokyash cha bhumkshva rajyam akantakam
Triyugam bhogasahitas tato smat parshvado bhava

I give you the authority to reign over all the three worlds, without any obstacles which you will enjoy for three eons and will become my devotee.

I give you the authority to rule the three worlds without any obstacles. You will be able to enjoy this for three eons and will become my devotee.

23

अन्यदपि च ते पुत्र देवानामपि दुर्लभम् ।
ददामि खलु याचस्व यत्तेमनसि वाञ्छितम् ।

Anyadapi cha te putra devanamapi durlabham
Dadami khalu yachasva yattemanasi vanchhitam

Anyad api cha te putra devanam api durlabham
Dadami khalu yachasva yat te manasi vanchhitam

'And something else son, whatever is difficult for the gods, I will certainly give you whatever you wish. You just tell me'.

You just tell me son whatever you wish, I will grant you. This is even difficult for the gods.'

24

इत्येवमुक्तो देवेश्या रावणो राक्षसोत्तमः ।
उवाच श्लक्ष्णं मधुरं भवानीं भय हारिणीम् ॥

Ityevamukto deveshya ravano rakshasottamah
Uvacha shlakshnam madhuram bhavanim bhaya harinim

Ity evam ukto deveshya ravano rakshasottamah
Uvacha shlakshnam madhuram bhavanim bhaya-harinim

Thus said the goddess to the great demon *Ravana*. He replied thus in a gentle sweet tone to the one who dispels the fear, *Bhavani*.

Ravana replied in a gentle tone to the one who dispels the fear.

25

यदि तेस्यान्महादेवि महान्मयि त्वनुग्रहः ।
तदा त्वं मद्गृहेसंस्था नित्यं सन्निहिताभव ॥

Yadi tesyanmahadevi mahanmayi tvanugrahah
Tada tvam madgrihesamstha nityam sannihitabhava

Yadi te syan mahadevi mahan mayi tv anugrahah
Tada tvam madgrihe samstha nityam sannihita bhava

If this is your bestowal of divine grace on me, oh Great Goddess, then do a favor to me, live in my house[8] always be near.

'If you are bestowing divine grace on me then do me a favor, oh great goddess, always be near me by living in my house.'

26

इत्येवमुक्ता सादेवी राक्षसेन महात्मना ।
परितुष्टेन मनसा तत्र वासममन्यत ॥

Ityevamukta sadevi rakshasena mahatmana
Paritushtena manasa tatra vasamamanyata

Ity evam ukta sa devi rakshasena mahatmana
paritushtena manasa tatra vasam amanyata

Having been addressed thus by the great souled demon, the goddess with satisfied spirit, agreed to live there.

When the great souled demon addressed her thus, the satisfied goddess agreed to live there.

8 In Hinduism one's house is congruent with a personal shrine which is further equated with one's body. On one level *Ravana* is inviting *Shyama* to his home or asking her to enter him, through Yogic means, and embody his innerself.

27

महा संकर्षणी ज्वाला ह्यनन्तो भुवि संस्थिता ।
पाशाङ्कुशधनुर्वाणैश्चतुर्भिरायुधैर्युता ॥

Maha samkarshani jwala hyananto bhuvi samsthita
pashankushadhanurvanaishchaturbhirayudhairyuta

Maha samkarshani jwala hy ananto bhuvi samsthita
pashankushadhanurvanaish chaturbhir ayudhair yuta

The great endless plougher, blazing like flame, is placed in the earth, endowed with four weapons: noose, hook, bow and arrow.[9]

Endowed with four weapons: hook, noose, bow, and arrow, the great plougher, blazing like fame, is placed in the earth.

9 The first half of the *shloka* describes an act of placing an endless blazing plough in the earth and the second half abruptly gives the emblems of the goddess (partly creating her iconic image). As if through this act the goddess was created with a bang! While the earth is primordial female creative agent, the 'endless blazing plough' (often equated with phallus) is the male principle. Such sexual images, though not clear are suggested throughout the *Mahatmya*.

28

त्रिनेत्रा तामसी शक्तिर्महासिंहोपरिस्थिता ।
श्यामा नामा तदाकारा लंकेशान दिशि स्थिता ॥

Trinetra tamasi Shaktirmahasimhoparisthita
Shyama nama tadakara Lankeshana dishi sthita

Trinetra tamasi Shaktir mahasimhoparisthita
Shyama-nama tadakara Lankeshana-dishi sthita.

Having three eyes *tamasi Shakti* who sits on the great lion[10] stayed in the *Ishana* corner of Lanka, having that appearance, called by the name *Shyama.*

***Tamasi* goddess *Shakti* who sits on the great lion and has three eyes stayed in a corner in Lanka and was called *Shyama*.**

29

राक्षसोपासिता भक्तया महिष्यैः मधुमानुष्यैः ।
एवं श्यामा परादेवी राक्षसैस्समुपाश्रिता ॥

Rakshasopasita bhattaya mahishyaih madhumanushyaih
Evam Shyama paradevi rakshasais samupashrita

Rakshasopasita bhattaya mahishyaih madhumanush(y)aih
Evam Shyama paradevi rakshasais samupashrita

Demons worship by sacrificing buffaloes, alcohol and humans. Thus *Shyama* as Para*devi* accepted such offerings from demons as devotion.

***Shyama* accepted the demonic offerings of buffaloes, alcohol and humans.**

10 Lion is associated with the goddess *Durga Mahishasurmardini* as her vehicle and symbolizes her majesty and power. Here the lion is associated with *Khir Bhavani*.

30

तामसो सातु तरुणी त्रिपुरायाः पराकला ।
अन्ते राक्षस कर्मणा परां घृणामभजत ॥

Tamasi satu taruni Tripurayah parakala
Ante rakshasa karmana param ghrinamabhajata

Tamasi sa tu taruni Tripurayah parakala
Ante rakshasa-karmana param ghrinam abhajata

Tamasi, maiden, of *Tripura* whose skill is greatest, stayed for a long time there. Eventually she had hatred towards all this because of the actions of the demons.

***Tripura*, the *Tamasi* virgin goddess stayed for a long time there. Eventually she developed hatred towards the demonic sacrifices.**

31

यदा तदपराधैः साचोद्विग्ना तद् गृहस्थिता ।
सतीदेशं समायातुं कृतव्रता सुनिश्चला ॥

Yada tadaparadhaih sachodvigna tad grihasthita
Satidesham samayatum kritavrata sunishchala

Yada tadaparadhaih sa chodvigna tad-grihasthita
Satidesham samayatum kritavrata sunishchala

The one who had made her home there was disheartened by the sins of the demons. The immovable one decided to move to the Satidesha.

Disheartened by the sins of the demons, the immovable one decided to move from her home to the land of Kashmir.

32

तदायाता सती देशं रामराज्य प्रदायिनी।
महाराज्ञीति विख्याता भुवनेशमुपाश्रिता॥

Tadayata Sati desham Ramarajya pradayini
Maharajniti vikhyata bhuvaneshamupashrita

Tadayata Sati-desham Ramarajya-pradayini
Maharajniti vikhyata bhuvanesham upashrita

From then on, the one who grants *Ramarajya*[11] was known as *Maharajni* and she made Satidesha her abode and lived in *Bhuvanesha*.

The goddess who grants *Ramarajya* was known as *Maharajni* and she made Kashmir her home.

11 *Rama*, the hero of the epic *Ramayana* was an ideal king. An incarnation of *Vishnu*, his perfect reign, *Ramarajya*, is regarded as a period of prosperity and peace and has become paradigmatic of an ideal rule.

33

नीता हनुमता देवी नागानन्तोपरिस्थिता ।
षष्टयुत्तरैर्नागशतैस्त्रिभिः सा परिवारिता ॥

Nita Hanumata devi naganantoparisthita
Shashtayuttarairnagashataistribhih sa parivarita

Nita Hanumata devi naganantoparisthita
Shashtayuttarair nagashatais tribhih sa parivarita

Guided by *Hanuman*[12], *Devi* came with countless nagas. Surrounded by eighteen thousand *nagash*.

Surrounded by countless nagash, the goddess was guided by *Hanuman*.

12 *Hanuman*, a alley of *Rama*, son of the Wind is a character in the epic *Ramayana*. 'Courage, skill, strength, tenacity of purpose, sagacity, experience, energy and prowers are all to be found in *Hanuman*...None is equal to him in strength or surpasses him in swiftness and intelligence...but an irrevocable curse was pronounced on him by sages on account of which he was unconscious of his great power. (Ibid. "*Uttarakanda.*" *Ramayana*, pp.490–498)

34

पाञ्चालाद्रिंसमुत्क्रम्य कपालमूल सन्निधौ ।
वियत् विष्णुपदोपत्य कायां प्रस्तर खण्डिके ॥

Panchaladrimasamutkrimya kapalamula sannidhau
Viyat vishnupadopatya kayam prastara khandike

Panchaladrim asamutkrimya kapalamula-sannidhau
Viyat vishnupadopatya kayam prastara khandike

Having passed Panchal mountains near Kapalamula, she reached Vishnupada which has conical stones.[13]

She passed Panchal mountains near Kapalamula and reached Vishnupada, which has conical stones.

13 George Buhler was the first scholar to notice the accurate topographical details given in all Kashmiri *Mahatmyas*. What follows in the next several *shlokas* is the description of all the pilgrimage centers of Kashmir when one enters the valley through the southern mountainous ranges of *Pir Panchal*.

35

मध्यग्रामान्तरे भूमौ-स्थित्वाच पुनरुत्थिता ।
ततः विष्णुगंगातीरे सानुमतीं दिवस्थलीम् ।।

Madhyagramantare bhumau-sthitvacha punarutthita
Tatah Vishnugangatire sanumatim divasthalim

Madhyagramantare bhumau sthitva cha punar utthita
Tatah Vishnugangatire sanumatim divasthalim

She got down at Madhya*grama* then again went to the banks of Vishnu Ganga and crossed mountainous Divasthala.

At Madhya*grama* she stopped and then went to the river Vishnu-Ganga from where she crossed mountainous Divasthala.

36

प्रच्छन्नवन वर्तिनीं खल्वारणीं मनोहराम् ।
जलहीनां विलोक्य तां प्रस्थिता चोत्तरा दिशाम्

Prachchhannavana vartinim Khalvaranim manoharam
Jalahinam vilokya tam prasthita chottara disham

Prachchhannavana vartinim khalvaranim manoharam
Jalahinam vilokya tam prasthita chottara-disham

Going around the dense forest she reached heart winning Khilavarini. Seeing it devoid of water she left towards the north direction.

She went to the heart winning Khilavarini but found it devoid of any water and therefore left towards the north.

37

तत्र मार्तण्ड पूर्वेसा लघुपुरे स्वनूपगे ।
दृष्टिं कृत्वा पुनर्याता श्रान्ता ह्यनन्तनागत: ।।

Tatra martanda purvesa laghupure svanupage
Drishtim kritva punaryata shranta hyanantanagatah

Tatra martanda-purve sa laghupure svanupage
Drishtim kritva punar yata shranta hy anantanagatah

Then she reached a small village Svanupaga on the east of Martand, having seen it once, she was fatigued at Anantanaga.

She reached a small village Svanupaga, on the east of Martand. She saw Martand once and was fatigued on reaching Anantanaga.

38

अनन्त नागैः संवृत्ता हनुमत्ता शिरोधृता ।
देवी भगवती राज्ञी भ्रान्ता सर्वत्र मण्डले ॥

Ananta nagaih samvritta Hanumatta shirodhrita
Devi Bhagavati rajni bhranta sarvatra mandale

Ananta nagaih samvritta Hanumatta shirodhrita
Devi Bhagavati rajni bhranta sarvatra mandale

Surrounded by endless snakes, sitting on the head of *Hanuman*, blessed *Devi Rajni* traveled the whole country.

The goddess *Maharajni* traveled the whole country of Kashmir sitting on the head of *Hanuman* and surrounded by endless snakes.

39

क्वचिल्लोक पुरारामे क्वचिद्रायस्थले शुभे ।
क्वचिद्वादि पुरे ग्रामे कोटीतीर्थे जले क्वचित् ॥

Kvachilloka purarame kvachidrayasthale shubhe
Kvachidvadi pure grame kotitirthe jale kvachit

Kvachil loka-purarame kvachid Rayasthale shubhe
Kvachid vadi-pure grame kotitirthe jale kvachit

Sometimes she went to shaded Lokutpur, sometimes to shining Rayasthal. Sometimes to village Vadipur and sometimes to the water pilgrimage Kotipur.

Sometimes she went to shaded Lokutpur, sometimes to shining Rayasthal. Sometimes to village Vadipur, sometimes to the water at the pilgrimage place Kotipur.

40

क्वचिच्चण्डपुराध्यक्षे क्वचिद् टंककरे तथा ।
एवं भ्रान्त्वा शारदातः सतीदेशं प्रत्यागता ॥

Kvachichchandapuradhyakshe kvachid tamkakare tatha
Evam bhrantva sharadatah Satidesham pratyagata

Kvachich chandapuradhyakshe kvachid tamkakare tatha
Evam bhrantva sharadatah Satidesham pratyagata

Sometimes to Chandipur and sometimes to Tankarpur and *Rajni* thus traveling came back to Satidesha from Sharda

Maharajni traveled to Chandipur and Tankarpur finally coming back to Kashmir from Sharada.

41

अन्ते संगमसान्निध्ये सिन्धुजल समावृतम् ।
सर्वं प्रान्तं स जम्बालं फनीनां हितकारकम् ॥

Ante sangamasannidhye sindhujala samavritam
Sarvam prantam sa jambalam phaninam hitakarakam

Ante sangamasannidhye sindhujala-samavritam
Sarvam prantam sa jambalam phaninam hitakarakam

In the end near the confluence, he brought her to a marshy area[14], suitable for the snakes, its whole edge surrounded by the river Sindh.

Hanuman **brought her eventually near the confluence to a marshy area which was suitable for the snakes.**

14 The mention of the confluence of the river Sindh and marshy area indicates the area of the Tulmul where the present shrine of *Maharajni Khir Bhavani* is located.

42

वीक्ष्य फल प्रदानेन स्वोपयुक्तमिमं स्थलम् ।
प्रसन्न वदना देवी हनुमन्तमबोधयत् ॥

Vikshya phala pradanena svopayuktamimam sthalam
Prasanna vadana devi Hanumantamabodhayat

Vikshya phala-pradanena svopayuktam imam sthalam
Prasanna-vadana devi Hanumantam abodhayat

She observed it being fruitful. Speaking happily to *Hanuman* that the place was good for her, she said...

The goddess observed the fruitful place with trees and was happy.

43

भक्त प्रवर रामेष्ट-वायुसूनो महाबल ।
विरम क्षणमत्र त्वमलगर्दांश्च चोदय ॥

Bhakta pravara Rameshta-vayusuno mahabala
Virama kshanamatra tvamalagardashcha chodaya

Bhakta-pravara-Rameshta vayusuno mahabala
Virama kshanam atra tvam alagardash cha chodaya

'The first among worshipers, dear to *Rama*, the child of the wind, of great might, stay here for a while and help the snakes'.

She said to *Hanuman*, 'Oh mighty child of the wind and the foremost worshiper dear to *Rama*, help the snakes by staying here for a while.

44

स्वैरं स्वैरं विसर्पत तूलवदत्र पाङ्किले ।
वयं च विश्रमिष्यामः छायाद्रुमेषु भूतले ॥

Svairam svairam visarpata tulavadatra pankile
Vayam cha vishramishyamah chhayadrumeshu bhutale

Svairam svairam visarpata tulavad atra pankile
Vayam cha vishramishyamah chhayadrumeshu bhutale

Order the snakes to creep in the marsh softly like a tuft of grass, we will also take rest on the ground, under the shadow of big trees'.

Order the snakes to creep in the marsh softly and we will rest on the ground under the shadow of big trees.'

45

इत्थं विश्रम्य श्यामा सा नानावर्णैरलङ्कृता ।
चिराय कृत सन्तोषा वासः सुखमभजत ॥

Ittham vishramya Shyama sa nanavarnairalankrita
Chiraya Krita santosha vasah sukhamabhajata

Ittham vishramya Shyama sa nanavarnairalankrita
Chiraya Krita santosha vasah sukhamabhajata

Thus that *Shyama* who was embellished with several colors[15] stayed there for a long time with peace and happiness.

Thus *Shyama*, embellished with many colors, lived there for a long time with peace and happiness.

15 Several colors refer to different qualities (*Gunas*) of the goddess.

46

आभुवनेशाच्चतुंगेशात्तथा लाब्धवनादपि ।
भागोहादपि वै प्रोक्तं मण्डल भुवि मण्डलम् ॥

Abhuvaneshachchatumgeshattatha labdhavanadapi
Bhagohadapi vai proktam mandala bhuvi mandalam

A bhuvaneshach chatumgeshat tatha labdhavanad api
Bhagohad api vai proktam mandala-bhuvi mandalam

This place surrounded by Bhuvanesha, Chatumgesha, Labdhavana and Bhagoha has been called foremost *mandala* among the *mandalas* of the earth.[16]

This place is called the foremost *mandala* and is surrounded by *Bhuvanesha, Chatumgesha, Labdhavana* and *Bhagoha*.

16 Thus the resting place of the goddess become the center of the universe surrounded by all the mentioned sacred places in its vicinity.

47

तूलवत्तुल्यतां यत्र स्थानान्यन्यानि सुन्दरि ।
लघु भूतानि मूल्येन तस्मात्तु तूल मूल्यकम् ॥

Tulavattulyatam yatra sthananyanyani sundari
Laghu bhutani mulyena tasmattu tula mulyakam

Tulavat tulyatam yatra sthanany anyani sundari
Laghu-bhutani mulyena tasmat tu tula-mulyakam

Let it be measured like a tuft of grass wherever there are other dwellings, oh beautiful one. They are insignificant in price-therefore their value is like a tuft of grass.[17]

Wherever there are other dwellings, let them be measured like a tuft of grass, insignificant in price.

17 This *shloka* neither makes sense in Sanskrit nor in English. Perhaps the manuscript was not copied correctly.

48

इत्थं व्यवस्थां स्वयं राजराज्ञी
विधाय प्रेष्य प्रिय रामदूतम् ।
चकार तत्र वसतिं स्व भावकं
तनौ ममुः येन न शक्ति भक्ताः ॥

Ittham vyavastham svayam rajarajni
Vidhaya preshya priya Ramadutam
Chakara tatra vasatim sva bhavakam
Tanau mamuh yena na Shakti bhaktah

Ittham vyavastham svayam rajarajni
Vidhaya preshya priya-Ramadutam
Chakara tatra vasatim sva-bhavakam
Tanau mamuh yena na Shakti-bhaktah

Establishing her own residence *Maharajni* herself bid goodbye to dear messenger of *Rama* and she herself lived there in the form (by) which the worshipers of *Shakti* did not measure.

Maharajni bid goodbye to *Hanuman* and established her home there.

49

अत्रस्थिताभूच्छान्ता सा क्षीर खण्डाज्यभोजना ।
सात्विका सत्वरूपा सा देवी पञ्चदशाक्षरी ॥

Atrasthitabhuchchhanta sa kshira khandajyabhojana
Sattvika sattvarupa sa devi panchadashakshari

Atra sthitabhuch chhanta sa kshira-khandajyabhojana
Sattvika sattvarupa sa devi panchadashakshari

Tranquil, the goddess lived there. She consumed milk, sugar and butter[18] had *sattvika* attributes, had true form and was of fifteen words.[19]

The peaceful goddess with sattvika qualities lived there with true form and a fifteen word *mantra* and consumed only milk, sugar and butter.

18 Milk, sugar and butter are considered *Sattivika* foods.

19 The fifteen syllable *Mantra* of the goddess *Khir Bhavani* is discussed in chapter four of this book. Kashmiris believe that reciting the *Mantra* in the correct way helps an initiate to reach a high level of consciousness.

50

अस्या उपासनाप्राप्ता: मुनयः परमांगतिम्
श्री रामो भजनादस्या लंकारावणमत्यघात् ॥

Asya upasana praptah munayah paramamgatim
Shri Ramo bhajanadasya, Lankara vanamatyaghat

Asya, upasana prap tah munayah paramam gatim
Shri-Ramo bhajanad asya Lankaravanam atyaghat

Seers obtain salvation by worshiping her. *Shri Rama* by meditating on her could kill *Ravana* of Lanka.

Seers obtain salvation by worshiping her and *Rama* was able to kill *Ravana* by meditating upon her.

51

अस्याः प्रसादनाद्द देवि ज्येष्ठोभ्राता विभीषणः ।
नित्यं शान्तात्मना राज्यं लंकायाः प्राप्तवानलम् ॥

Asyah prasadanad devi jyeshthobhrata vibhishanah
Nityam shantatmana rajyam Lankayah praptavanalam

Asyah prasadanad devi jyeshtho bhrata vibhishanah
Nityam shantatmana rajyam Lankayah praptavana lam

By her blessings, oh *Devi*, the elder brother of *Ravana*, *Vibhishana*, always with peaceful soul, surely obtained the kingdom of Lanka.

Peaceful souled *Vibhishana*, the elder brother of *Ravana* was able to obtain the kingdom of Lanka by her blessings.

52

अस्यास्तु भजनात्सर्वे परांसिद्धि मुपागताः।
पुरा श्यामा भवेद्यातु लङ्केश-भवने तदा।
सैवेदानीं सतीदेशे महाराज्ञीतिविश्रुता॥

Asyastu bhajanatsarve paramsiddhim upagatah
Pura Shyama bhavedyatu Lankesha-bhavane tada
Saivedanim Satideshe Maharajnitivishruta
Asyas tu bhajanat sarve param siddhim upagatah
Pura Shyama bhaved ya tu Lankesha-bhavane tada
Saivedanim Satideshe Maharajniti vishruta

By meditating upon her all obtain complete attainment of their aim. The one who used to live at Lanka as *Shyama* became famous as *Maharajni* in Satidesha.

The one who used to live at Lanka as *Shyama* became famous as *Maharajni* in Kashmir. By meditating upon her everyone can obtain their aim completely.

53

रामराज्य प्रदा सैव तरुणी या परा कला

Ramarajya prada saiva taruni ya para kala

Ramarajya-prada saiva taruni ya para kala

That maiden whose skill is highest bestows *Ramarajya*.

The best skilled virgin goddess bestows *Ramarajya*.

54

प्रपद्यमनसानां च सद्यो मोक्ष प्रदायिनी ।
पुत्रकामा महेशानि । धनं चापि धनार्थिनः ॥
विद्यार्थिनो महाविद्यां कन्यां कन्यार्थिनः प्रिये

Prapadyamanasanam cha sadyo moksha pradayini
Putrakama maheshani dhanam chapi dhanarthinah
Vidyarthino mahavidyam kanyam kanyarthinah priye

Prapadyamanasanam cha sadyo moksha-pradayini
Putrakama maheshani dhanam chapi dhanarthinah
Vidyarthino mahavidyam kanyam kanyarthinah priye

She straightway gives deliverance to those whose minds seek refuge, oh consort of *Mahesha*, such as those who wish for sons (she gives sons), those who wish for money she gives money, those who desire knowledge she gives knowledge, and those who wish for a daughter she gives them a daughter, dear.

She gives deliverance to those who desire salvation, those who wish for sons or daughters she gives sons and daughters, those who want money she gives money and those who want knowledge she gives knowledge.

55

धनं धान्यं पशूंश्चापि गृहक्षेत्रं निरन्तरम् ।
प्रसादात्परमेशान्यः प्राप्नुवन्ति न संशयः ।।

Dhanam dhanyam pashumashchapi grihakshetram nirantaram
Prasadatparameshanyah prapnuvanti na samshayah

Dhanam dhanyam pashumsh chapi grihakshetram nirantaram
Prasadat parameshanyah prapnuvanti na samshayah

By the favor of the most excellent Lady, her followers always get treasure, grain, animals, home and field continuously, there is no doubt.

By the grace of the most excellent lady her devotees get treasure, grain, animals, home field continuously. About this there is no doubt.

56

दिव्यं-चैवान्त रिक्षंच-भौमं घोरमुपद्रवम् ।।

Divyam-chaivanta rikshamcha bhaumam ghoramupadravam

Divyam chaivantariksham cha bhaumam ghoram upadravam

Whether one is looking towards the sky or the atmosphere or the earth or is in deep adversity.

Whether one is looking toward the sky, the atmosphere, or the earth, or is in deep adversity...

57

महामारी भयं घोरं भयं दुर्भिक्षजं तथा ।।
महाराजभयं चापि भजनान्नाशयेद्ध्रुवम् ।।

Mahamari bhayam ghoram bhayam durbhikshajam tatha
Maharajabhayam chapi bhajanannashayeddhruvam

Mahamari-bhayam ghoram bhayam durbhikshajam tatha
Maharajabhayam chapi bhajanan nashayed dhruvam

...or is fearful of terrible famine and a devastating fear, or is fearful of the king. These are all assuredly eliminated by meditating upon her.

or is afraid of terrible famine, devastating fear, or is afraid of the king, all of these would be surely eliminated by meditating upon her.

58

महा संकट मापन्नः प्रमुच्येत्सकंटादपि ।
रोगात्प्रमुच्यते रोगी तरेदापन्न आपदः ॥

Maha sankata mapannah pramuchyet sankatadapi
Rogatpramuchyate rogi taredapanna apadah

Maha-sankatam apannah pramuchyet samkatad api
Rogat pramuchyate rogi tared apanna apadah

One who is afflicted with great distress escapes distress, one who is sick is released from sickness, and one afflicted is able to get through calamities.

If one is afflicted with great distress or is sick or is going through calamities, one is released from all that.

59

भवेच्चेह महाभोगी सोन्ते सायुज्य माप्नुयात् ।
योस्याः मन्त्रं जपेत्पूर्णं सागोपाङ्गं रहस्यकम् ।
यन्त्र पूजां प्रकुर्वाणः शिव एवेति निश्चितम् ॥

Bhavechcheha mahabhogi sonte sayujya mapnuyat
Yosyah mantram japetpurnam sagopangam rahasyakam
Yantra pujam prakurvanah Shiva eveti nishchitam

Bhavech cheha mahabhogi sonte sayujyam apnuyat
Yosyah mantram japet purnam sagopangam rahasyakam
Yantra-pujam prakurvanah Shiva eveti nishchitam

The enjoyer who becomes one with god attains release. Whoever recites her *Mantra* which has all the secrets, and worships her *Yantra*, he should be satisfied that he will become *Shiva*.

The worshiper who becomes one with the deity attains salvation. Whoever recites her *Mantra* and worships her *Yantra* should be sure that he will become *Shiva*.

60

अथवा वाग्भवै मंन्त्रैः पूजयेज्जगदम्बिकाम् ।
गंगा प्रवाह वद्वाणी भवेत्तस्य न संशयः ॥

Athava vagbhavair mantraih pujayejjagadambikam
Ganga pravaha vadvani bhavettasya na samshayah

Atha va vagbhavair mantraih pujayej jagadambikam
Ganga-pravaha-vadvani bhavet tasya na samshayah

Or whoever worships the mother of the world with *Mantras* produced by voice[20], his speech will flow like the flow of the river Ganges, about that there is no doubt.

There is no doubt that whoever worships the mother of the world with spoken *mantras*, his speech will flow like the flow of the river Ganges.

20 Merit is gained not only by the recitation of goddess's *Mantra* but also by listening to it.

61

इयं पञ्चदशीख्याता तरुणी परमा कला ।
त्रिपुरायाः परादेव्या महाराज्ञीतिविश्रुता ॥
शान्त स्वरूपा देवेशी महाशान्तैरूपासिता ॥

Iyam panchadashikhyata taruni parama kala
Tripurayah paradevya maharajnitivishruta
Shanta svarupa deveshi mahashantairupasita

Iyam panchadashikhyata taruni parama kala
Tripurayah paradevya Maharajniti vishruta
Shanta-svarupa deveshi mahashantair upasita

Thus the fifteen worded maiden became famous as *Maharajni* (*Khir Bhavani*) of peaceful form, Deveshi, who earlier was goddess *Tripura* (*sundari*). That is why the seers of peaceful soul worship her.

The goddess who was *Tripura* before, she became fifteen worded virgin goddess *Maharajni* having peaceful form. That is why the peaceful souled seers worship her.

62

यदारावणगेहे भून्महा श्री तामसी कला ।
द्वाविंशत्यच्चरा घोरा तामसी समुपासिता ॥

Yadaravanagehe bhunmaha Shri tamasi kala
Dvavimshatyakshara ghora tamasi samupasita

Yada ravanagehe bhun maha-Shri-tamasi kala
Dvavimshatyakshara ghora tamasi samupasita

When beautiful *tamasi* lived in the house of *Ravana*, she was worshiped with twenty two words as terrible *tamasi*.[21]

In the house of *Ravana* she was worshiped as twenty two worded *tamasi*.

21 The mantra of Tamasi Maharajni Khir Bhavani has twenty two syllables and is recited as:
Krím Krím Krím
Hrím Hrím Hrím Hrím Dakshine Kalike
Hrím Hrím Hrím Hrím
Krím Krím Krím Svaha

63

महाश्यामेतिविख्याता घोरभद्या सुरोत्तमा ।
सतोदेशमनुप्राप्ता नीता हनुमता स्वयम् ॥

Mahashyametivikhyata ghorabhakshya surottama
Satideshamanuprapta nita Hanumata svayam

Mahashyameti vikhyata-ghorabhakshya surottama
Satidesham anuprapta nita Hanumata svayam

She was famous as the great *Shyama*, the greatest of divinities and was offered terrible food. She was shown the way to the Satidesha by *Hanuman* himself.

She was famous as the greatest of the divinities, *Shyama* and was offered terrible food. *Hanuman* himself showed her the way to Kashmir.

64

अनन्तनाग सहिता रामानुज्ञानुकारिणी ।
उपासिता ददत्येवं सर्वान्कामान् यथेप्सितान् ॥

Anantanaga sahita Ramanujnanukarini
Upasita dadaty evam sarvan kaman yathepsitan

Anantanaga-sahita Ramanujnanukarini
Upasita dadaty evam sarvan kaman yathepsitan

She along with many snakes following the consent of *Rama*, if worshiped she fulfills all the desires wished by one's heart.

If she is worshiped along with many snakes (and by the consent of *Rama*) all one's desires are fulfilled.

65

इत्येतत्कथितं देवि यत्पृष्टोहमिह त्वया ।
श्यामाभूद्रावणे गेहे सत्ये राज्ञीति विश्रुता ॥

Ityetatkathitam devi yatprishtohamiha tvaya
Shyamabhudravane gehe satye rajniti vishruta

Ity etat kathitam devi yatprisht oham iha tvaya
Shyamabhud ravane gehe satye rajniti vishruta

Thus I tell you, *Devi*, as you inquired from me, *Shyama*, with *Ravana*, at his home, she became known as *Maharajni* in truth.

Thus I have informed you, as you inquired from me how *Shyama* who was at *Ravana*'s home came to be known as *Maharajni*.

66

अस्यास्तु श्रवणात् पुण्यं
भवेत् यज्ञायुतं कलौ ।
एतत् पाठाद् महादेवि-
सद्यो मुच्येत बन्धनात्।

Asyastu shravanat punyam
Bhavet yajnayutam kalau
Etat pathad mahadevi
Sadyo muchyeta bandhanat

Asyas tu shravanat punyam
Bhavet yajnayutam kalau
Etat-pathad mahadevi
Sadyo muchyeta bandhanat

From hearing of her in *Kaliyuga* one earns merit equivalent to doing sacrifice for ten thousand years. From the study of this, oh great goddess, straightway one will be released from the bindings of this world.

By listening to what I have said one is able to get released from the bindings of this world. One earns merit by hearing about the goddess in *Kaliyuga* which is equivalent to doing sacrifice for ten thousand years'.

श्री महाराज्ञी–प्रादुर्भाव–विवरणम्

अथ द्वितीयः पटलः

(भृङ्गीश - संहिता - तः)

श्री महाराज्ञी - भगवत्यै नमः !

SHRI-MAHARAJNI PRADURBHAVA-VIVARANAM

Atha Dvitiyah-Patalah,
(Bhringisha-Samhita-Tah)
Shri-Maharajni-Bhagavatyai Namah
Exposition on the Manifestations of Shri-Maharajni
Second Chapter
(From *Bhringisha-Samhita*)
Homage to *Shri-Maharajni*

SECOND RENDERING

1

श्री भैरवी :-

देवदेव महादेव सर्वज्ञ परमेश्वर ।
कृपां कुरु महादेव विस्तरेण शृणोम्यहम् ॥

Shri Bhairavi:
Devadeva Mahadeva sarvajna Parameshwara
Kripam kuru Mahadeva vistarena shrinomyaham

Shri Bhairavi:
Devadeva Mahadeva sarvajna parameshwara
Kripam kuru Mahadeva vistarena shrinomy aham

Shri Bhairavi said:
God of gods, Great God, All knowing Supreme God. Please, god, explain, I am desirous of listening extensively.

Shri Bhairavi asked: 'Great god, please explain I want to know in details...

2

कादेवी त्रिपुरा प्रोक्ता कथं श्यामाभवत्स्वयम् ।
कथं रामेणार्चिताभूत्कथं प्राप्ता सतीसरम् ॥

Kadevi Tripura prokta katham Shyamabhavatsvayam
Katham Ramenarchitabhutkatham prapta Satisaram

Ka devi Tripura prokta katham Shyamabhavat svayam
Katham Ramenarchitabhut katham prapta Satisaram

Who is this goddess known by the name *Tripura*? Why did she become *Shyama* herself? Why did *Rama* worship her? Why did she come to Satisar (Kashmir)?

Who is the goddess *Tripura* who because of her own wish became *Shyama* and then came to Kashmir? And why did *Rama* worship her?'

3

एतत्सर्वं महादेव किंकरास्मि तव प्रिय ।
श्री भैरवः
शृणु देवि प्रवक्ष्यामि यत्पृष्टं गिरिजे त्वया ।
अस्याः श्रवण मात्रेण सर्ववृद्धिः प्रजायते ॥

Etatsarvam Mahadeva kimkarasmi tava priya
Shri Bhairavah
Shrinu devi pravakshyami yatprishtam girije tvaya
Asyah shravana matrena sarvavriddhih prajayate

Etat sravam Mahadeva kimkarsmi tava priya.
Shri-Bhairavah
Shrinu devi pravakshyami yat prishtam girije tvaya
Asyah shravana-matrena sarvavriddhih prajayate

tell me all that, God. I am at your service, dear.
Bhairava replied: Listen, *Devi*, you of the mountains, I will tell you as asked, by mere hearing of which one obtains every delight.

Bhairava replied, 'Listen, I will tell you as you have asked me. By mere listening of which one can obtain delight.

4

विधातृपुत्रतनयः पौलस्त्यो रावणोऽसुरः ।
महादेव कृतां लज्जां दृष्ट्वा रुरोद सोऽसुरः ॥

Vidhatriputratanayah Paulastyo Ravano surah
Mahadeva kritam lajjam drishtva ruroda so'surah

Vidhatriputratanayah Paulastyo Ravano surah
Mahadeva-kritam lajjam drishtva ruroda so surah

The demon *Ravana* was the descendent of *Brahma's* son *Pulasti*. That demon wept, seeing embarrassment caused by the Great Lord ...

The great god *Shiva* saw *Ravana*, the descendent of *Brahma's* son Pulasti weeping.

5

पुलस्तिं च शिवः प्राह किमर्थं रुदति शिशुः ।
तमुवाच मुनिः श्रीमन् लंकां प्रार्थयति प्रभो ।।

Pulastim cha Shivah praha kimartham rudati shishuh
Tamuvacha munih shriman Lankam prarthayati prabho

Pulastim cha Shivah praha kim artham rudati shishuh
Tam uvacha munih shriman Lankam prarthayati prabho

... and *Shiva* asked Pulasti, 'why is your child crying'? The seer replied that he wants to possess Lanka.[22] 'Oh excellent Lord'.

***Shiva* asked Pulasti, 'Why is your son crying?' Pulasti replied that he wants to possess Lanka.**

22 The island of Shri lanka may suggest the geographic land surrounded by waters or a heart or a lotus.

6 • 7

प्रहस्य तं मुनिं प्राह देवदेवो वृषाकपिः।
शृणु ब्रह्मन् प्रवक्ष्यामि त्वत्तनूजो ह्ययं शिशुः॥
भुवनानां दुःखदायी भविष्यति न संशयः।

Prahasya tam munim praha devadevo vrishakapih
Shranu Brahman pravakshyami tvattanujo hyayam shishuh
Bhuvananam duhkhadayi bhavishyati na samshayah

Prahasya tam munim praha devadevo vrishakapih
Shranu Brahman pravakshyami tvattanujo hy ayam shishuh
Bhuvananam duhkhadayi bhavishyati na samshayah

Laughing, the God of gods, the Great God said to the seer, 'listen Brahmin to what I tell you. Your son who is a child now, will bring misfortune to the created things, there is no doubt.

Shiva said to the seer Pulasti, 'Listen your son is going to bring misfortune to the creatures there is no doubt about that.

8

अस्मै दास्याम्यहं लङ्कां सुप्रियां राक्षसेश्वर ।
आदौ तपः प्रभावेन प्रसन्नः क्रियतां विधिः ॥

Asmai dasyamyaham Lankam supriyam rakshaseshwara
Adau tapah prabhavena prasannah kriyatam vidhih

Asmai dasyamy aham Lankam supriyam rakshaseshwara
Adau tapah-prabhavena prasannah kriyatam vidhih

Oh god of demons, yet 1 will give him the beautiful Lanka provided he undergoes a great penance that is pleasing.

Yet I will give him Lanka on one condition that he undergoes a great penance'.

9

तस्मात्प्राप्तवरो नित्यं लंका राज्यं करिष्यति ।
इत्येतद्वचनं श्रुत्वा रावणो लोक कर्षणः
प्रहस्य चेश्वरं प्राह प्रणयानत कन्धरः ॥

Tasmatpraptavaro nityam Lanka rajyam karishyati
Ityetadvachanam shrutva Ravano loka karshanah
Prahasya cheshwaram praha pranayanata kandharah

Tasmat praptavaro nityam Lanka-rajyam karishyati
Ity etad vachanam shrutva ravano loka-karshanah
Prahasya cheshwaram praha pranayanata-kandharah

He will then obtain the boon of running the kingdom of Lanka each day. Having heard these words *Ravana*, the one who torments the worlds, laughed and gently bowed his head, addressing the Lord...

Having heard these words of *Shiva*, *Ravana*, the one who torments the world, laughed and gently bowed his head,

10

देवदेव महादेव शरणागत वत्सल ।
कोब्रह्मा जगतांसृष्टा त्वद्ध्यान मुखरीकृतः ॥

Devadeva Mahadeva sharanagata vatsala
Kobrahma Jagatamsrishta tvaddhyana mukharikritah

Devadeva Mahadeva sharanagata vatsala
Kobrahma Jagatam srishta tvaddhyana-mukharikritah

...And said, 'Protector, God of gods, Great God to whom I have come for shelter. By meditating on you *Brahma* the creator of the world became the-one-with-eloquent-speech.

And said, 'The great God by meditating upon you, *Brahma* the creator of the world, became the one with eloquent speech,

11

त्वंसर्वव्यापी विश्वात्मा देवदेव महेश्वर ।
प्रपन्नं पाहि मां भक्तं कृपया परमेश्वर ॥

Tvamsarvavyapi vishwatma devadeva Maheshwara
Prapannam pahi mam bhaktam kripaya parameshwara

Tvam sarvavyapi vishwatma devadeva Maheshwara
Prapannam pahi mam bhaktam kripaya parameshwara

You are all Immanent, the soul of the world, God of gods, Great God, accept me as your disciple, please, Great God.

Please great god, immanent, the soul of the world, accept me as your disciple.

12

यदुक्तं परमेशान मच्छ्रेयः प्राप्ति कारणम् ।
तपो महेश्वर विभो येन ब्रह्मा प्रसीदति ॥

Yaduktam parameshana machchhreyah prapti karanam
Tapo Maheshwara vibho yena Brahma prasidati

Yad uktam parameshana machchhreyah prapti-karanam
Tapo maheshwara vibho yena Brahma prasidati

Just as you say, Supreme God, for my own benefit I should do penance by which *Brahma* is pleased.

I should do penance which would be pleasing to *Brahma*, for my own benefit'

13

तदाविन्ध्यं प्रतिगतो रावणो बालकोपि सन् ।
तपश्चचार परमं दुष्करं दैव मानवैः ॥

Tadavindhyam pratigato Ravano balakopi san
Tapashchachara paramam dushkaram daiva manavaih

Tada vindhyam pratigato Ravano balakopi san
Tapash chachara paramam dushkaram daiva-manavaih

Then *Ravana*, a child, went to Vindhya mountains and did great penance which is even difficult for humans and gods.

***Ravana*, just a child, went to Vindhya mountains and did penance for ten thousand years, which is difficult even for the gods, as well as humans. *Brahma* was pleased with him.**

14

वर्षाणामयुतं देवि ब्रह्मा प्रीतस्तुतं प्रति ।
ब्रह्माह्याविरभूत्तत्र प्रीतोस्मीति वरं ददौ ।
भो भो पौलस्त्य सुभग किं याचे वद सत्वरम् ॥

Varshanamayutam devi Brahma pritastutam prati
Brahmahyavirabhuttatra pritosmiti varam dadau
Bho bho Paulastya subhaga kim yache vada sattvaram

Varshanam ayutam devi Brahma pritas tu tam prati
Brahma hy avir abhut tatra pritosmiti varam dadau
Bho bho Paulastya subhaga kim yache vada sattvaram

After ten thousand years Brahma was pleased with him, oh, goddess (*Bhairavi*). *Brahma* appeared in front of him then and said, 'since I am pleased with you, I give you a boon, say son of Pulasti, favored one, tell me quickly what boon do you want?

Brahma appeared in front of _Ravana_ and asked him to ask for any wish he desired.

15

इत्याश्रुत्यवचोदिव्यं रावणो दनुजप्रियः।
प्रोवाच तं महादेवि ब्रह्माणं प्रपितामहम्।

Ityashrutyavachodivyam Ravano danujapriyah
Provacha tam mahadevi brahmanam prapitamaham

Ity ashrutya vacho divyam Ravano danujapriyah
Provacha tam mahadevi brahmanam prapitamaham

Having heard these divine words the demon *Ravana* said to *Brahma*, his great-grandfather, Maha*devi*.

Ravana said to his great grandfather *Brahma*,

16

वरदोसि यदा देव लंकां देहि जगत्पते ।
मह्यं सुखाय वासाय यतोऽ जेयोभवाम्यहम्

Varadosi yada deva Lankam dehi jagatpate
Mahyam sukhaya vasaya yato jeyobhavamyaham

Varadosi yada deva Lankam dehi jagatpate
Mahyam sukhaya vasaya yato jeyo bhavamy aham

'If you want to give me a boon, oh god, give me Lanka', Lord of the world, so that I am able to reside happily and no one is able to conquer me.

'If you want to give me any boon give me Lanka so that I am able to reside in it happily and no one is able to conquer me.'

17

इति श्रुत्वा वचस्तस्य रावणस्य महेश्वरि ।
लंका प्राप्तात्वया शम्भो रजेयस्त्वं भविष्यसि ॥

Iti shrutva vachastasya Ravanasya Maheshwari
Lanka praptatvaya shambho rajeyastvam bhavishyasi

Iti shrutva vachas tasya Ravanasya Maheshwari
Lanka prapta tvaya shambhor ajeyas tvam bhavishyasi

Having heard the words of *Ravana*, oh *Maheshwari*, *Brahma* replied, 'you will possess *Lanka* and *Shiva* will not be able to defeat you...

Brahma replied, 'You will be able to possess *Lanka* and *Shiva* will not be able to defeat you.

18

महामाया हरेः सम्यग् सीता यावन्न जायते
तावद् देवै र्मनुष्यैश्च दैत्यै र्मानव पुंगवैः ॥

Mahamaya hareh samyag Sita yavanna jayate
Tavad devai manushyaishcha daityair manava pungavaih

Mahamaya hareh samyag Sita yavan na jayate
Tavad devai manushyaish cha daityair manava-pungavaih.

As long as *Mahamaya Sita* of *Hari* truly is not born, so long by gods, humans, demons and heroes among men...

As long as the wife of *Rama, Sita,* is not born.'

19

अजेयोह्यसि पौलस्त्य ति सत्यं वदामि ते ।
ततोऽसौ रावणोलकां प्राप्यचेश्वर मताम्
देवानां दुःखदो भूत्वा दैत्यानां सुखदो भवत् ।।

Ajeyohyasi Paulastya — ti satyam vadami te
Tato'sau Ravanolankam prapyacheshwara — matam
Devanam duhkhado bhutva daityanam sukhado bhavat

Ajeyo hy asi Paulastya ti satyam vadami te
Tato'sau. Ravano Lankam prapya cheshwara ? matam
Devanam duhkhado bhutva daityanam sukhado bhavat

...You will be unconquered, son of Pulasti, I am telling you the truth. Then *Ravana* obtained splendid (?) Lanka which was full of sorrow for gods but pleasurable for all the demons.

Thus *Ravana* was able to obtain Lanka which was pleasurable for all the demons but full of sorrow for the gods.

20

वर्षाणामयुतं प्राप्य शिवाराधन तत्परः ॥

Varshanamayutam prapya Shivaradhana tatparah

Varshanam ayutam prapya Shivaradhana-tatparah

But he continued to pray to *Shiva* for ten thousand years.

Ravana continued to pray to *Shiva* for ten thousand years.

21

मलये देवनिलये चकार तप उत्तमम् ॥
न सन्तुष्टोऽभवत् देवि शंकरो देव शंकरः ॥

Malaye devanilaye chakara tapa uttamam
Na santushto bhavat devi shankaro deva shankarah

Malaye devanilaye chakara tapa uttamam
Na san tushto bhavat devi shankaro deva shankarah

On the mountain Malaya in a temple he did the best penance. In spite of all this *Shankara*, the lord *Shankara*, was not satisfied with him, oh *Devi.*

On the Malaya mountain in a temple *Ravana* did the best of penance but *Shiva* was not pleased with him.

22

नारदो भगवद् दूतो गत्वा रावण सन्निधौ ।
दृष्ट्वा रक्षोधिपं विप्रो ह्युवाच मुनि पुंगवः ॥

Narado bhagavad duto gatva Ravana sannidhau
Drishtva rakshodhipam vipro hyuvacha muni pungavah

Narado bhagavad-duto gatva Ravana-sannidhau
Drishtva rakshodhipam vipro hy uvacha muni-pungavah

God's messenger, the most excellent seer, inspired Narada, saw demon *Ravana*, went near him and said,

***Narada*, god's messenger saw *Ravana* and went to him.**

23

किंकृतं हि त्वया दैत्य ह्युत्तमाङ्ग विकर्तनम्
निष्फलमभवत्सर्वं प्रसादरहिते शिवे[27] ॥

Kimkritam hi tvaya daitya hyuttamanga vikartanam
Nishphalamabhavatsarvam prasadarahite Shive
Kimkritam hi tvaya daitya hy uttamanga-vikartanam
Nishphalam abhavat sarvam prasadarahite Shive

'Demon, why are you cutting off the best part (of your body)? Everything is without results unless *Shiva* is pleased.

***Narada* asked, 'demon why are you cutting off the best parts of your body? All this is useless unless *Shiva* is pleased.**

24

नन्दी च तुम्बुरुश्चैव लास्यनृत्त परावुभौ।
न कैलासे न मेरौ च मन्दरे नैव वर्तते

Nandi cha tumburushchaiva lasyanritta paravubhau
Na kailase na merau ca mandare naiva vartate

Nandi cha tumburush chaiva lasyanritta parav ubhau
Na kailase na merau cha mandare naiva vartate

As both *Nandi* and as *Tambura* he is outstanding in the *Lasya* dance.
Shiva is not in Kailasa, not in Meru, not in Mandara.

Shiva is not in Kailasa, Meru or Mandara mountains. With his vehicle *Nandi* and his instrument *Tambura,* he is the best *Lasya* dancer.

25

यतो नादं श्रृणोत्येष तत्रैव वर्तते प्रभुः ।
न काय छेदने नैव न पूजा पठनादिभिः ॥

Yato nadam shrinotyesha tatraiva vartate prabhuh
Na kaya chhedane naiva na puja pathanadibhih

Yato nadam shirnoty esha tatraiva vartate prabhuh
Na kaya-chhedane naiva na puja-pathanadibhih

The Lord goes wherever he hears the sound. He does not appear by making holes in the body or by worshiping recitation and so forth.

The lord goes wherever he hears a sound. He neither goes to those who make holes in their bodies nor to those who worship by recitation.

26

शिवः प्रसन्नतामेति यथा नादेन सुव्रत ।
इत्युत्त्वा प्रययौ विप्रो नारदो ब्रह्मसत्तमः ॥
(पूजा पठनैरपि) इत्यपि पाठः

Shivah prasannatameti yatha nadena suvrata
Ityuttva prayayau vipro narado Brahmasattamah
(puja pathanairapi) Ityapi pathah

Shivah prasannatam eti yatha nadena suvrata
Ity uttva prayayau vipro narado brahmasattamah
(puja-pathanairapi) Ity api pathah

Shiva becomes happy by means of sound, oh penitent. Having said this, sagacious Narada, best among gods, went away. (with worship and recitation). Thus the recitation.

Shiva becomes happy by means of sound.' Having said this *Narada* went away.

27

छिन्न शीर्षो दशग्रीवो मस्तकैकयुतोऽग्रतः ।
चक्रे नादं महाघोरं भैरवं भैरवेश्वरि ॥

Chhinna shirsho dashagrivo mastakaikayuto gratah
Chakre nadam mahaghoram bhairavam bhairaveshwari

Chhinna-shirsho dashagrivo mastakaikayuto gratah
Chakre nadam mahaghoram bhairavam bhairaveshwari

The ten headed had cut off his (nine) necks and had only one head left in front. He started to make a very frightful sound, *Bhairaveshwari*.

Ravana **started making a very frightful sound because the ten headed had cut off his nine necks; only one head was left.**

28 • 29

अत्यन्तं मधुरं सूक्ष्मं प्रबोधनकरं परम् ।
तेन नादेन भगवान्महादेवो महेश्वरि ॥
भैरवेण प्रबुद्धस्तु रावणं प्रददर्श ह ॥

Atyantam madhuram sukshmam prabodhanakaram param
Tena nadena bhagavanmahadevo maheshwari
Bhairavena prabuddhastu Ravanam pradadarsha ha

Atyantam madhuram sukshmam prabodhanakaram param
Tena nadena bhagavan mahadevo maheshwari
Bhairavena prabuddhas tu Ravanam pradadarsha ha

That very sweet and subtle invigorating sound was heard by god, oh *Maheshwari*, and that terrible sound woke him up and he saw *Ravana* in front of him.

The frightful sound changed into subtle sound which woke up *Shiva* and he saw *Ravana* in front of him.

30

अद्य रावण दौरात्म्य किं कृतं राक्षसाधिप ।
किं वृणे वद दास्यामि यदलभ्यं सुरासुरैः ॥

Adya Ravana dauratmya kim kritam rakshasadhipa
Kim vrine vada dasyami yadalabhyam surasuraih

Adya Ravana dauratmya kim kritam rakshasadhipa
Kim vrine vada dasyami yad alabhyam surasuraih

Today *Ravana*, of evil soul, king of the demons, tell me what boon do you want. I will give you one which is even difficult for demons or non-demons to achieve

'Tell me evil souled *Ravana,* what boon do you want. I will give you one which is difficult for anyone else to get.'

31

रावण:
देव देहि पर नाथ भैरवस्य पदं शिव ।
येन नादेन स्वप्तस्त्वं प्रबोधोसि महेश्वर ॥

Ravanah:
Deva dehi param natha bhairavasya padam Shiva
Yena nadena svaptastvam prabodhosi Maheshwara

Ravanah:
Deva dehi param natha bhairavasya padam Shiva
Yena nadena svaptas tvam prabodhosi Maheshwara

Ravana said, 'Give me lord, oh Great protector, give me a condition of *Bhairava*, oh *Shiva*, by which sound you are awakened if you are asleep.[23]

***Ravana* said, 'God give me the condition of Bhairava so that my sound is able to awaken you.**

23 Experiencing *Bhairava*-or *Shivahood* is the ultimate goal of a *Tantric Yogi*; a state of supreme bliss in which the devotee and *Shiva* are one.

32

ततो मे देहि सर्वज्ञ वरं त्रिभुवनेश्वर ।
यथापूर्वमहं नाथ मस्तकैर्दशाभिः युतैः ॥

Tato me dehi sarvajna varam tribhuvaneshwara.
Yathapurvamaham natha mastakair dashabhih yutaih

Tato me dehi sarvajna varam tribhuvaneshwara
Yathapurvam aham natha mastakair dashabhih yutaih

And give me another boon all knowing, Lord of the three citadels, make me with ten heads the way I was before.

And give me another boon, make me the way I was before. Give me my heads back.

33

तथा मां कुरु तादृक्षं त्वद्भक्ति तत्परं शिव ।
संभवामि प्रीतिकारी दनुजानां महेश्वर ॥

Tatha mam kuru tadriksham tvadbhakti tatparam Shiva
Sambhavami pritikari danujanam maheshwara

Tatha mam kuru tadriksham tvadbhakti-tatparam Shiva
Sambhavami pritikari danujanam maheshwara

Make me such so that 1 am devoted to you always *Shiva* and I get love of all *Danuj* people.

Make me such that I get love of all demons.'

34

श्री भैरव:

भैरवस्त्वं महाभाग रागाना मधिपोभव ।
यथापूर्वं दशग्रीवस्त्वं तथाह्यधुना भव ॥

Shri-Bhairavah:
Bhairavastvam mahabhaga Ragana madhipobhava
Yathapurvam dashagrivastvam tathahyadhuna bhava

Shri-Bhairavah:
Bhairavas tvam mahabhaga Raganam adhipo bhava
Yathapurvam dashagrivas tvam tatha hy adhuna bhava

Bhairava replied, 'the one of great destiny, you will become *Bhairava* and the lord of the melodies and all your heads will grow now the way they were.

Shiva replied, 'You will become lord of melodies and *Bhairava* and you will get all your heads back.

35

दैत्यानां प्रीतिमान्विप्र भव नित्यं महामते ।
इति प्राप्तवरो दैत्यो रावणो लोक कर्षणः ।

Daityanam pritimanvipra bhava nityam mahamate
Iti praptavaro daityo Ravano loka karshanah

Daityanam pritiman vipra bhava nityam mahamate
Iti praptavaro daityo Ravano loka-karshanah

You of the great mind, inspired, the demons will always be loving towards you. After obtaining all the boons the demon *Ravana* the trouble maker ...

You of the great mind the demons will be always loving towards you.'

36

मतिं चकार दैत्यानां स तदा सुख हेतवे ।।
मुनीनां मानवानां च देवानां कदनं महत् ।
चक्रे घोरतमोरूपमाश्रित्य बल दर्पितः ।।

Matim chakara daityanam sa tada sukha hetave
Muninam manavanam cha devanam kadanam mahat
Chakre ghoratamorupamashritya bala darpitah

Matim chakara daityanam sa tada sukha-hetave
Muninam manavanam cha devanam kadanam mahat
Chakre ghoratamorupam ashritya bala-darpitah

... thinking about the happiness of all the demons decided to make a great destruction of seers, people and gods, and took refuge in His Terrible Form, arrogant in his strength.

After obtaining all the boons *Ravana* the trouble maker, arrogant in his strength, decided to destroy all people, seers and gods. Thinking about the happiness of all the demons he took refuge in the terrible form of *Shiva*.

37

धर्मसंस्थापनार्थाय साधूनांरक्षणाय च ।
राक्षसानां वधार्थाय भगवान्भूतभावनः ॥

Dharmasansthapanarthaya sadhunamrakshanaya cha
Rakshasanam vadharthaya bhagavan bhutabhavanah

Dharmasansthapanarthaya sadhunam rakshanaya cha
Rakshasanam vadharthaya bhagavan bhutabhavanah

In order to establish a religious institution, to protect the good souls and destroy the demons, god *Bhutabhavana*[24] was born.

In order to protect the good souls and destroy the demons god *Rama* was born.

24 *Bhutabhavan* is another epithet of *Rama*.

38

जातो त्रेतायुगे पुत्रो राज्ञो दशरथस्य वे ।
गृहे पूर्णं कलारूपः कौसल्यानन्दवर्धनः ॥

Jato tretayuge putro rajno Dasharathasya ve
Grihe purna kalarupah Kausalyanandavardhanah

Jato tretayuge putro rajno Dasharathasya ve
Grihe purna-kalarupah kausalyanandavardhanah

During *Tretayuga*, in the home of king *Dasharatha*, a son handsome and full of talents was born increasing the happiness of *Kausalya*.

In the home of *Dasharatha* a handsome and talented son was born to *Kausalya* making them happy.

39

श्री रामो जगतां नाथः सीता माया तथेश्वरि ।
रावणस्य वधार्थाय भूभार हरणाय च ॥

Shri Ramo jagatam nathah Sita maya tatheshwari
Ravanasya vadharthaya bhubhara haranaya cha

Shri-Ramo jagatam nathah Sita maya tatheshwari
Ravanasya vadharthaya bhubhara-haranaya cha

Shri Rama the lord of the worlds along with *Sita*, oh lady, for the purpose of destroying *Ravana* and in order to take away the burden of the Earth ...

Rama along with his wife *Sita* in order to destroy *Ravana*...

40

गतो वानर संयुक्तो लंका प्रति महामतिः ।
युद्धं चकार समुहत्सप्तम्यां वानरैः युनः ।।

Gato Vanara Samyukto lankam prati mahamatih
Yuddham chakara samuhatsaptamyam vanaraih yutah

Gato vanara-samyukto lankam prati mahamatih
Yuddham chakara samuhat saptamyam vanaraih yutah

...the great-minded one went to Lanka along with the army of monkeys. A terrible war was fought on the day of *Saptami*, with the assistance of the monkeys.

...went to Lanka with the army of monkeys. With their assistance a terrible war was fought.

41

मेघनादादिकान् हतान् रावणो भयविह्वलः ।
मन्दोदरीं प्राह ततः कथं मृत्युंव्रजेदयम् ॥

Meghanadadikan hatan Ravano bhayavihvalah
Mandodarim praha tatah katham mrityumvrajedayam

Meghanadadikan hatan Ravano bhayavihvalah
Mandodarim praha tatah katham mrityum vrajed ayam

Seeing (his son) *Meghanada* and others being killed *Ravana* fearful of death asked *Mandodari*, in what way could this one (*Rama*) go to death'?

When *Ravana* saw his son *Meghanatha* killed, he asked his wife *Mandodari* how can *Rama* be killed?

42

मन्दोदरी :
श्रृणु रावण वक्ष्येहं प्रीत्योक्तं नारदेन हि ।
रामो मनुष्यतां प्राप्तो भगवान् भूत भावनः ॥

Mandodarih:
Shrinu Ravana Vakshyeham prityoktam naradena hi
Ramo manushyatam prapto bhagavan bhuta bhavanah

Mandodarih :
Shrinu Ravana Vakshyeham prityoktam naradena hi
Ramo manushyatam prapto bhagavan bhuta-bhavanah

Mandodari said, 'Listen *Ravana*, *Narada* had told me this with much affection that Lord *Bhutabhavana* has incarnated himself in human form.

Mandodari replied, '*Narada* once told me that god *Rama* has incarnated himself in human form.

43

श्यामः श्यामाम्बरो नित्यं श्यामा पूजन तत्परः ।
लंकां संप्राप्य सीतां च राज्यं दत्वा विभीषणे ॥

Shyamah shyamambaro nityam Shyama pujana tatparah
Lankam samprapya sitam cha rajyam datva vibhishane

Shyamah shyamambaro nityam Shyama pujana-tatparah
Lankam samprapya sitam cha rajyam datva vibhishane

The dark one, wearing the dark clothes, is absorbed in the worship of the Dark One (*Shyama*), each day. In time he will take Lanka and *Sita* and give the kingdom to *Vibhishana* and...

Each day he worships the dark goddess *Shyama*. At the appropriate time he will take Lanka and *Sita* and give Lanka to *Vibhishana*.

44

पुष्पकेन विमानेन गृहान्गच्छत्यसौ पुन ।
तस्मात्सर्वं प्रयत्नेन राज्यंदेहिविभीषणे ॥

Pushpakena vimanena grihangachchhatyasau puna
Tasmatsarva prayatnena rajyamdehivibhishane

Pushpakena vimanena grihan gachchhaty asau puna
Tasmat sarva-prayatnena rajyam dehi vibhishane

...go home again in *Pushpak Vimana*. Therefore you yourself with all endeavor should give the kingdom to *Vibhishana*.

Then he will go home. It is better you give Lanka to *Vibhishana* yourself.

45

सीतां रामाय त्वं देहि वयं यास्याम भक्तपम् ।
श्री शम्भुं परमेशानं प्रणतार्ति हरं परम् ॥

Sitam Ramaya tvam dehi vayam yashyama bhaktapam
Shri Shambhum parameshanam pranatarti haram param

Sitam Ramaya tvam dehi vayam yashyama bhaktapam
Shri-Shambhum parameshanam pranatarti haram param

...You give *Sita* to *Rama* so that we can go and become devoted to god *Shambhu*[25], most excellent who takes away the sickness which makes the body bent.

You give *Sita* to *Rama* and we will become devoted to *Shiva* who takes away the old.age.

25 Another *Shiva*'s Kashmiri name is *Shambhu* or (*Shambhoo*)

46

तपसा तोषयिष्यावः शिवं परमकारणम् ।
स एव देवो भगवान् प्रसन्नः स्याद् सदाशिवः ॥

Tapasa toshayishyavah Shivam paramakaranam
Sa eva devo bhagavan prasannah syad sadashivah

Tapasa toshayishyavah Shivam paramakaranam
Sa eva devo bhagavan prasannah syad sada Shivah

We two will please, the most excellent *Shiva* with penance. The blessed god *Shiva* is always beneficial (to his devotees).

We will please the most excellent *Shiva* by our penance. He is always beneficial to his devotees.

47

रामं गृहे गते नाथ लंकां प्राप्स्याम जीवनात् ।

Ramam grihe gate natha lankam prapshyama jivanat
Ramam grihe gate natha lankam prapshyama jivanat

By then *Rama* would have gone home and we will obtain Lanka again.

Then *Rama* will go home and we might get back Lanka'.

48

इति श्रुत्वा वचस्तस्या मन्दोदर्या मुखाम्बुजात् ।
निराद्दत्य गतः स्थानं यत्र देवी नकुम्भिला। ॥

Iti shrutva vachastasya mandodarya mukhambujat
Niradritya gatah sthanam yatra devi nikumbhila

Iti shrutva vachas tasya mandodarya mukhambujat
Niradritya gatah sthanam yatra devi nikumbhila

Having heard these words of *Mandodari* from her lotus like mouth he paid no attention to her and went to the place where *Devi Nikhumbala* (*Bhadrakali*) was placed.

Ravana did not pay any attention to *Mandodari* and went to the place where *Bhadrakali* (another name for *Shyama*) was enshrined.

49

मन्दोदरी समं तत्र पूजां चक्रे स रावणः ।
उवाचशनकैः वाक्यं राजा मन्दोदरीं प्रति ॥

Mandodari samam tatra pujam chakre sa Ravanah
Uvachashanakaih vakyam Raja mandodarim prati

Mandodari samam tatra pujam-chakre sa Ravanah
Uvacha shanakaih vakyam Raja mandodarim prati

Ravana worshiped there with *Mandodari* and then the king softly uttered a sentence to her ...

Ravana worshiped the goddess with *Mandodari* and then said to her,

50

हे मन्दोदरि ! सुश्रेणि ! रामश्चेद्भगवान्स्वयम् ।
श्यामायाः पूजने सक्तस्तदाह्यावाह्यामि तम् ॥

He Mandodari! sushreni! Ramashchedbhagavansvayam
Shyamayah pujane saktastadahyavahyami tam

He Mandodari sushreni Ramash ched bhagavan svayam
Shyamayah pujane saktas tada hy avahyami tam

'*Mandodari*, one-with-beautiful-hips, god *Rama* himself worships the Dark one (*Shyama*), therefore I will ask him to come here...

'I will ask *Rama* to come here because he himself worships the goddess *Shyama*.

51

आगातश्चेद् सानुजश्च स हनूमाँस्तथा परैः ।
बलिं दास्याम्यहं देव्यै सहसा चानुगैः सह ॥

Agatashched sanujashcha sa Hanumanstatha paraih
Balim dasyamyaham devyai sahasa chanugaih saha

Agatash ched sanujash cha sa Hanumans tatha paraih
Balim dasyamy aham devyai sahasa chanugai saha

... And when he comes here with his younger brother and *Hanuman*,
I will suddenly sacrifice him along with his family to the goddess.

And when he comes here with his brother and with *Hanuman* I will sacrifice him and his family to the goddess.'

52

तत आवाह्य श्रीरामं रावणोराक्षसाधिपः ।
रामः प्रादुरभूत्तत्र पूजा मण्डपमध्यगः ॥

Tata avahya ShriRamam Ravanorakshasadhipah
Ramah pradurabhuttatra puja mandapamadhyagah
Tata avahya Shri-Ramam Ravano rakshasadhipah
Ramah pradur abhut tatra puja mandapamadhyagah

Then the king of demons *Ravana* invited *Shri Rama*, who appeared in the middle of the worshiping area.

Ravana invited *Rama* who appeared in the middle of the worshiping area.

53

प्राह रामं महादैत्यो रावणो घोर दर्शनः ।
सीतां त्यज व्रजगृहं यदि जीवितुमिच्छसि ।।

Praha Ramam mahadaityo Ravano ghora darshanah
Sitam tyaja vrajagriham yadi jivitumichchhasi
Praha Ramam mahadaityo Ravano ghora-darshanah
Sitam tyaja vraja griham yadi jivitum ichchasi

The great demon *Ravana* with a terrible look pronounced to *Rama* if you want to stay alive, leave *Sita* here and you go home.

Ravana with the terrible eyes pronounced to *Rama*, 'If you want to stay alive leave *Sita* here and go home.

54

नान्यथा त्वं बलिविधौ उपहारं तनोम्यहम् ।
श्रीश्यामायाः पादुकायां प्राह राजीवलोचनः ।।

Nanyatha tvam balividhau upaharam tanomyaham
Shri Shyamayah padukayam praha rajivalochanah
Nanyatha tvam balividhau upaharam tanomy aham
Shri Shyamayah padukayam praha rajivalochanah

Otherwise I will sacrifice you and offer you to *Shyama*'s shoe, the lotus eyed pronounced.

Otherwise I will sacrifice you to *Shyama*.'

55

भो भो दुष्ट दुराचार किं व्रजाम गृहं प्रति ।
सोतां गृह्णामि श्री श्यामां गृहीत्वा त्वांनिपात्यच ।

Bho bho dushta durachara kim vrajama griham prati
Sotam grihnami Shri Shyamam grihitva tvamnipatyacha

Bho bho dushta durachara kim vrajama griham prati
Sotam grihnami Shri Shyamam grihitva tvam nipatya cha

(Rama replied), 'Say, evil and mean minded, why should we go home. I will take *Sita* and having taken *Shyama* I will go home but only after destroying you.[26]

Rama angrily replied, 'You evil and mean minded one, I will go home only after taking *Sita/Shyama* and destroying you.

26 In this *shloka* the figures of *Shyama* and *Sita* are consciously linked to reinforce their oneness in order to strengthen the connection between the *Mahatmya* and the epic *Ramayana*.

56

लंकां दास्यामि ते भ्रात्रे भक्ताय सुहृदाय मे
इति श्रुत्वा वचः क्रोधा दष्टम्या मर्धरात्रिके ॥

Lankam dasyami te bhratre bhaktaya suhridaya me
Iti shrutva vachah krodha dashtamya mardharatrike

Lankam dasyami te bhratre bhaktaya suhridaya me
Iti shrutva vachah krodhad ashtamyam ardharatrike

I will give Lanka to your brother, a devotee and my friend. Having heard these words, *Ravana* angry in the middle of night on the day of *Astami*...

I will give Lanka to your brother *Vibhishana*, my devotee and friend.' This made *Ravana* angry. On the day of *Astami* in the middle of the night. . . .

57

खड्गं निकृष्य श्रीरामं प्रति दुद्राव च्छेदितुम् ।

तस्मिन्नवसरे देवी श्री श्यामा रावणं प्रति ॥

Khangam nikrishya Shri Ramam prati dudrava chchheditum
Tasminnavasare devi Shri Shyama Ravanam prati

Khangam nikrishya Shri Ramam prati dudrava chchheditum
Tasminn avasare devi Shri-Shyama Ravanam prati

...Took out his sword and ran to attack *Shri Rama*. At that time goddess *Shyama* spoke to *Ravana*...

...he took out his sword and ran to attack *Rama*. At this time *Shyama* spoke to *Ravana*.

58

प्रहस्य क्रोधताम्राक्षी मेघ गम्भीरया गिरा ।
उवाच जगतां धात्री धिक् त्वां हे राक्षसाधम ॥

Prahasya krodhatamrakshi megha gambhiraya gira
Uvacha jagatam dhatri dhik tvam he rakshasadhama

Prahasya krodhatamrakshi megha-gambhiraya gira
Uvacha jagatam dhatri dhik tvam he rakshasadhama

She laughed, her eyes dark with anger, her voice thundering like clouds clashing against each other, and said, 'shame on you, you demon! Thus said the mother of the Universe.

Her eyes dark with anger, her voice thundering like clouds clashing, the mother of the universe, laughed and said, 'Shame on you demon.

59

अहं व्रजामि मद्देशे हिमाचल वरे शुभे
सती सरसि कश्मीर वैष्णाव व्रत धारिणी ॥

Aham vrajami maddeshe Himachala vare shubhe
Sati sarasi Kashmira vaishnava vrata dharini

Aham vrajami maddeshe Himachala-vare shubhe
Sati-sarasi Kashmire Vaishnava-vrata-dharini

I am going to my own region, to the most beautiful lake of *Sati*, to Kashmir, in the Himalayan mountains and vow to follow vegetarianism.

I am going to my own region, to the most beautiful lake of Kashmir in the Himalayan mountains and wow to follow vegetarianism.'

60

हनुमन्तं ततः प्राह श्री रामो मनुजाकृतिः ।
वीरेश वीर हनुमन्सानन्तां श्री महेश्वरीम् ॥

Hanumantam tatah praha Shri Ramo manujakritih
Viresha vira Hanumansanantam, Shri Maheshwarim

Hanumantam tatah praha Shri-Ramo manujakritih
Viresha vira Hanuman sananttam Shri-Maheshwarim

Then *Shri Rama* having human form, pronounced to *Hanuman*, Oh *Hanuman*, the bravest of brave, take *Shri Maheshwari* along with *Ananta*,

Shri Rama said to *Hanuman*, 'Bravest of the brave, *Hanuman*, take *Shri Maheshwari* (referring to *Shyama*) with Anantanaga to Kashmir.'

61

गृहाण गच्छ भद्रं ते कश्मीरं प्रति शीघ्रग ।
एवमस्त्विति संपृच्छ्य वीरीशो हनुमान् तथा

Grihana gachchha bhadram te Kashmiram prati shighraga
Evamastviti samprichchhya virisho Hanuman tatha

Grihana gachchha bhadram te Kashmiram prati shighraga
Evam astv iti samprichchhya virisho Hanuman tatha

And go towards Kashmir moving quickly—bless you.' 'As you wish', said brave *Hanuman* then.

Hanuman said, 'As you wish.'

62

पृष्ठे तच्चरणौ कृत्वा संप्राप्तश्चोत्तरा पथम् ।
श्री रामो रणभूमिं स्वां जगाम नगरं प्रति ॥

Prishthe tachcharanau kritva Sampraptashchottara patham
Shri Ramo ranabhumim svam jagama nagaram prati

Prishthe tachcharanau kritva Sampraptash chottara-patham
Shri-Ramo ranabhumim svam jagama nagaram prati

Putting her feet on his back, he arrived to the North. *Shri Rama* went to his battlefield near the city.

The goddess put her feet on his back, and *Rama* went to his battlefield near the city.

63

उवाच भ्रातरं वीरं श्वो हतोऽयं भविष्यति
सीतां गृहीत्वा यास्यामोऽयोध्यां सर्व जनार्थिताम्।

Uvacha bhrataram viram shvo hatoyam bhavishyati
Sitam grihitva yasyamo yodhyam sarva janarthitam

Uvacha bhrataram viram shvo hatoyam bhavishyati
Sitam grihitva yasyamo yodhyam sarva-janarthitam

He said to his brother the hero, this one will be slain tomorrow, then we will take *Sita* home. For whom all people of *Ayodhya* are eagerly waiting.[27]

He said to his brother, '*Ravana* will be slain tomorrow and then we will take *Sita* home.'

27 While in *shloka* 55 the figures of *Shyama* and *Sita* are collated, in the present *shloka* 65 they are separated again. While the former is sent to Kashmir with *Hanuman*, the latter is expected to return to *Ayodhya*, the capital of *Rama*'s kingdom.

64

ततः प्रभाते संपन्ने रावणो भयविह्वल: ।
रणभूमिं गतं रामं प्रोवाच वचनं शनै: ॥

Tatah prabhate sampanne Ravano bhayavihvalah
Ranabhumim gatam Ramam provacha vachanam shanaih

Tatah prabhate sampanne Ravano bhayavihvalah
Ranabhumim gatam Ramam provacha vachanam shanaih

Next morning having arrived *Ravana* terrified by fear uttered these words softly to *Rama* who had come to the battlefield.

Next morning on the battle field, terrified *Ravana* softly uttered these words to *Rama*.

65

रामराम महामायी त्यजमानं च जानकीम्
गच्छ त्वं यत्र गत्वा वै जीवितं प्रास्यसि ध्रुवम् ॥

Rama Rama Mahamayi tyajamanam cha janakim
Gachchha tvam yatra gatva vai jivitam prasyasi dhruvam

Rama Rama Mahamayi tyaja manam cha janakim
Gachchha tvam yatra gatva vai jivitam prasyasi dhruvam

Rama, *Rama* give up your arrogance and *Sita*; go wherever you should go; surely you are throwing away your life.

'*Rama* give up your arrogance and *Sita*, go wherever you have to go and do not throw away your life.

66

नोचेद्गच्छसि त्वं राम युद्धं कुरु मयासह
द्वन्दात्मिकं नान्यथैव यदि त्वं वीर उत्तमः ॥

Nochedbhachchhasi tvam Rama yuddham kuru mayasaha
Dvandatmikam nanyathaiva yadi tvam vira uttamah

No ched bhachchhasi tvam Rama yuddham kuru maya saha
Dvandatmikam nanyathaiva yadi tvam vira uttamah

If you do not leave, *Rama*, you will have to fight with me. If you think you are the bravest then let's have a duel and not otherwise.

If you do not leave you will have to fight with me. Let's have a duel.'

67

एवमस्त्विति रामो वै रावणं प्रोक्तवान्स्वयम् ।
एहि युद्धं करोम्यत्र तिष्ठ त्वं समरांगणे ॥

Evamastviti Ramo vai Ravanam proktavansvayam
Ehi yuddham karomyatra tishta tvam samarangane

Evam astv iti Ramo vai Ravanam proktavan svayam
Ehi yuddham karomy atra tishta tvam samarangane

'So be it', replied *Rama* himself, 'come to the battle, here I perform. Stand in the battlefield.'

Rama replied, 'Come to the battle field, so be it.'

68

प्राप्ते नवम्यां मध्याह्ने रावणो भय कातरः।
प्राणान्मुमोच श्री रामशस्त्रेणाभिहतोऽसुरः ॥

Prapte navamyam madhyahne Ravano bhaya katarah
Prananmumocha Shri Ramashastrenabhihato-surah

Prapte navamyam madhyahne Ravano bhaya-katarah
Pranan mumocha Shri-Ramashastrenabhihato-surah

On the day of *Navami Ravana* the demon affected by fear breathed his last, killed by *Rama.*[28]

Ravana was killed by *Rama* on the day of *Navami* on the battle field.

28 Despite *Ravana*'s vigorous penance, boons given to him by gods, and acquiring *Sattvika* qualities, he is eventually killed because of his arrogance, greed and delusion.

69

दिव्य द्वन्दभयोनेदुः ननृतुश्चाप्सरोगणाः
अवाकिरन् पुष्प वर्षैः रामंत्रिदिवौकसः ॥

Divya dvandabhayoneduh nanritushchapsaroganah
Avakiran pushpa varshaih Ramamtridivaukasah

Divya-dvandabayo neduh nanrihtush chapsaroganah
Avakiran pushpa-varshaih Ramam tridivaukasah

From fear of the divine fight, instruments were played, troops of *Apsaras* danced, they scattered showers of flowers—the inhabitants of heaven..

The inhabitants of heaven scattered showers of flowers, played instruments and danced.

70

जयेत्युक्तं तदा सर्वैः वानरैः सर्वतो दिशम्
तदा प्रभृति श्री रामः पूर्णिमांया दिवा निशम्॥

Jayetyuktam tada sarvaih vanaraih sarvato disham
Tada prabhriti Shri Ramah purnimamya diva nisham

Jayety uktam tada sarvaih vanaraih sarvato disham
Tada prabhriti Shri-Ramah purnimamya diva-nisham

Monkeys in all the directions said, 'Victory'! Since that day and night of *Puranamasi, Shri Rama...*

Monkeys from all the directions said, 'Victory!' Since that day on the night on *Puranamasi*. . .

71

यात्रां करोति विधिवत् स सीतां सानुजः हरिः
मन्दोदर्याथ चाष्टम्यां नवम्यां वा विभीषणः

Yatram karoti vidhivat sa Sitam sanujah Harih
Mandodaryatha chashtamyam navamyam va Vibhishanah

Yatram karoti vidhivat sa Sitam sanujah Harih
Mandodaryatha chashtamyam navamyam va Vibhishanah

... Duly performs this journey. *Hari*, accompanied by his younger brother, (conveys) *Sita*. And *Vibhishana* does it with *Mandodari* on *Ashtami* or *Navami*.[29]

. . . *Shri Rama* with his brother and wife regularly performs this journey. *Vibhishana* performs it with *Mandodari* on *Ashtami* or *Navami*. . . .

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29 The eighth (*Ashtami*) and the ninth day (*Navami*) of the waxing moon of the lunar months are regarded as holy in Kashmiri religious calendar (*Nechapatr*).

72

हनूमांस्तु सदैवात्र वर्तते द्वारपो बली ।
पर्वस्वेतेषु संपूज्य जनैः सर्वार्थसिद्धये ॥

Hanumamstu sadaivatra vartate dvarapo bali
Parvasveteshu sampujya janaih sarvarthasiddhaye

Hanumams tu sadaivatra vartate dvarapo bali
Parvasu eteshu sampujya janaih sarvarthasiddhaye

And *Hanuman* always acts as a strong door-keeper here. By giving honor on these days of the changing moon all people achieve success in all that they do.

...*Hanuman* acts as a door keeper. By honoring gods on the days of changing moons people achieve success.

73

इत्येतत् कथितं देवि
राज्ञः प्रादुर्भावं शिवे ।
यस्य श्रवण मात्रेण
जायन्ते सर्व सिद्धय: ॥

Ityetat kathitam devi
Rajnah pradurbhavam Shive
Yasya shravana matrena
Jayante sarva siddhayah

Ity etat kathitam devi
Rajnah Pradurbhavam Shive
Yasya shravana-matrena
jayante sarva-siddhayah

Thus this *Rajni Pradurbhava* (*Mahatmya*) has been narrated, oh *Devi Shiva*.. By mere listening of which all successes are obtained.

Thus has been narrated *Maharajni Pradurbhava* by mere hearing of which all successes are obtained.'

श्री महाराज्ञी भगवत्यै नमः

SHRI-MAHARAJNI-BHAGAVATYAI NAMAH
(Homage to Maharajni Bhagavati)

The Homage

1

श्री भैरव उवाचः
श्री शैलशिखरासीनं भगवन्तमुमापतिम्।
चन्द्रार्धं मुकुटं देवं सोमसूर्याग्नि लोचनम्॥

Shri Bhairava uvacha:
Shri Shailashikharasinam bhagavantamumapatim
Chandrardha mukutam devam somasuryagni lochanam

Shri Bhairava uvacha:
Shri-shailashikharasinam bhagavantam umapatim
Chandrardha-mukutam devam somasuryagni-lochanam

God, *Uma's* husband, was sitting on *Shail* peak having the half moon on his crown, his eyes like moon, sun and fire.

God *Shiva Bhairava, Uma's* husband, whose three eyes are like moon, sun and fire was sitting on Shail peak with a half moon on his crown.

2

गजचर्म परीधानं विरूपाक्षं सुराधिपम् ।
गण गन्धर्व यक्षेन्द्र देवासुर नमस्कृतम् ॥

Gajacharma paridhanam virupaksham suradhipam
Gana gandharva yakshendra devasura namaskritam

Gajacharma-paridhanam virupaksham suradhipam
Gana-gandharva-yakshendra-devasura-namaskritam

Wearing an elephant skin, he has terrible eyes, the lord of the *Suras*. The one who is paid respect by *Ganas*, *Gandharvas*, the best of *Yakshas*, *Devas* and *Asuras*.[30]

The one who is paid respect by *Suras*, *Ganas*, *Gandharvas*, *Yakshas*, *Devas* and *Asuras* was wearing an elephant skin and had terrible eyes.

30 In the next few *shlokas*, *Shiva* is described in all his grandeur and power in order to impress upon the devotee that the god with that kind of respect and might himself worships no one but the goddess *Maharajni Khir Bhavani*.

3

विहसन्तं जपन्तं च पठन्तं च मुहुः मुहुः ।
उत्थाय प्रणता भूत्वा पर्यपृच्छत भैरवी ॥

Vihasantam japantam cha pathantamcha muhuh muhuh
Utthaya pranata bhutva paryaprichchhata Bhairavi

Vihasantam japantam cha pathantam cha muhuh muhuh
Utthaya pranata bhutva paryaprichchhata Bhairavi

The saint laughed, recited and read over and over. *Bhairavi* standing up and paying homage asked ...

He was laughing, reciting and reading over and over again. His wife (*Bhairavi*) paid homage and asked...

4

भगवंस्त्वं परोदेवः सुरासुर नमस्कृतः ।
वेद वेदाङ्ग तत्वज्ञो गुणातीतश्चिदीश्वरः॥

Bhagavamstvam parodevah surasura-namaskritah
Veda vedanga tatvajno gunatitashchidishwarah

Bhagavams tvam parodevah surasura-namaskritah
Veda-vedanga-tatvajno gunatitash chid-ishwarah

'Lord, Great God *Suras* and *Asuras* all pay homage to you. You have knowledge of all the *Vedas* and *Vedangas* and possess all the gunas, God...

'Great god *Suras* as well as *Asuras* pay homage to you. You have all the knowledge and qualities,

5

सतत किं जपस्यास्य तत्वं सर्वोत्तमं विभो ।
अद्याप्यविदितं यन्मे तत्वं त्वं वक्तुमर्हसि ॥

Satatam kim japasyasya tatvam sarvottamamvibho
Adyapyaviditam yanme tatvam tvam vaktumarhasi

Satatam kim japasyasya tatvam sarvottamam vibho
Adyapy aviditam yan me tatvam tvam vaktum arhasi

Why do you continuously murmur this prayer, Lord? Even now you have not made me familiar with the highest Truth of this. You ought to tell me.

Why do you always murmur this prayer? You still have not told me the highest truth of this. Please tell me.'

6

श्री भैरव उवाच
या देवी निष्कला श्यामा निराभासा निरञ्जना
महा श्री षोडशी विद्या या राज्ञीति निगद्यते ॥

Shri Bhairava uvacha:
Ya devi nishkala Shyama nirabhasa niranjana
Maha Shri Shodashi vidya ya rajniti nigadyate

Shri Bhairava uvacha:
Ya devi nishkala Shyama 'nirabhasa niranjana
Maha-Shri-Shodashi vidya ya rajniti nigadyate

Shri Bhairava replied:
That goddess who was *Shyama*, without any form, without any luster, without appearance, having sixteen knowledge, who is called *Rajni* ...

The god *Bhairava* replied, 'The goddess *Shyama* who is without any form, luster or appearance and who has sixteen knowledge and is called *Rajni*...

7

स्वयं राज्यप्रदा देवी-विद्या राज्ञी महेश्वरी ।
देवी पञ्चदशा वाणी परंब्रह्म कुटुम्बिनी ॥

Svayam rajyaprada devi-vidya Rajni Maheshwari
Devi panchadasha vani parambrahma kutumbini

Svayam rajyaprada devi vidya Rajni Maheshwari
Devi panchadasha-vani parambrahma-kutumbini

She herself is kingdom bestowing goddess of knowledge *Rajni Mahadevi*, goddess having fifteen words and is of the family of highest *Brahmin*.

. . . . *Maharajni* having a fifteen worded *mantra*, from the family of highest *Brahmins* is the kingdom bestowing goddess.

8

नृणां दारिद्र्य नाशाय प्रादुर्भूताद्य भारती ।

Nrinam daridrya nashaya pradurbhutadya bharati

Nrinam daridrya-nashaya pradur bhutadya bharati

In order to destroy the poverty of men, she has appeared today—*Bharati.*

She has appeared today in order to destroy the poverty of men,

9

तस्याः पञ्चदशी विद्यां गुह्यामविदितां पराम् ।
तां जपामि महादेवीं तत्पञ्चाङ्गं स्मराम्यहम् ॥

Tasyah panchadashi vidyam guhyamaviditam param
Tam japami mahadevim tatpanchangam smaramyaham

Tasyah panchadashi-vidyam guhyam aviditam param
Tam japami mahadevim tatpanchangam smaramy aham

I recite her fifteen worded knowledge which is esoteric, unrevealed, Supreme, and murmur prayer to her and repeat her five sections.

I recite her *Mantra* which is esoteric, unrevealed and supreme.'

10

श्री भैरवी उवाच
भगवन् करुणाम्भोधे शरणागत वत्सल
या देवी लोकमातेति राज्ञी राज्यप्रदायिनी ॥

Shri Bhairavi uvacha:
Bhagavan karunambhodhe sharanagata vatsala
Ya devi lokamateti Rajni rajyapradayini

Shri-Bhairavi uvacha:
Bhagavan karunambhodhe sharanagata vatsala
Ya devi lokamateti Rajni rajyapradayini

Lady *Bhairavi* said:
Lord, you ocean of compassion, to whom I come for shelter, dear one
that goddess, protectress mother of the world, kingdom giving *Rajni*...

Bhairavi said, 'The goddess who is the mother of the world, kingdom bestowing *Rajni*...

11

दारिद्रय हारिणीत्वद्य तत्पञ्चाङ्गं वदस्व मे
तत्वतो देव तन्त्राढ्यं यद्यहं प्रीयसी तव ॥

Daridrya harinitvadya tatpanchangam vadasva me
Tatvato deva tantradhyam yadyaham priyasi tava
Daridrya-harini tv adya tatpanchangam vadasva me
Tatvato deva tantradhyam yady aham priyasi tava

... and today the one who destroys poverty, tell me about her five sections. If I am your beloved give me her real essence abounding in *Tantra*, God.

. . . and who destroys poverty, tell me about her real essence abounding in *Tantra*.'

12

श्री भैरव उवाचः

श्रृणुष्ववहिता भूत्त्वा पठलं मन्त्र विग्रहम ।

राज्ञः सर्वस्य भूतं मे रहस्यं देव दुर्लभम् ।

Shri Bhairava uvacha:
Shrinushvavahita bhutva pathalam mantram vigraham
Rajnah sarvasya bhutam me rahasyam deva durlabham

Shri Bhairava uvacha:
Shrinu shvavahita bhutva pathalam mantram vigraham
Rajnah sarvasya bhutam me rahasyam deva-durlabham

Shri Bhairava replied:
Listen attentively, I will tell you an individual *Mantra*, I will tell you the whole secret of the divinity which is even difficult for the gods to get.

Bhairava replied, 'Listen, I will tell you the whole secret of divinity, which is even difficult for the gods to get.

13

मन्त्रोद्धारं महादेवि राज्ञ्याः मद्धदनोदितम् ।
श्रुत्वा गोपय यत्नेन येन सिद्धिः प्रजायते ।

Mantroddharam mahadevi Rajnyah maddhadanoditam
Shrutva gopaya yatnena yena siddhih prajayate

Mantroddharam mahadevi Rajnyah maddhadanoditam
Shrutva gopaya yatnena yena siddhih prajayate

Having heard that abstract, *Mahadevi* which I speak, protect it. The *Mantra* of the great goddess *Rajni* by which one can achieve success.

Having heard that abstract you must protect the *Mantra* of the goddess by which one can achieve success.

14

मन्त्रोद्धार :–

तारं माया मानलः कामशक्ति
मध्यं चाख्या भगवत्यै च राज्ञ्यै ।
माया बीजं ठद्वयं देवि राज्ञः
मन्त्रोद्धारो वर्णितो गोपनीयः ॥

Mantroddharah:
Taram maya manalah kamashakti
Madhyam chakhya bhagavatyai cha Rajniyai
Maya bijam thadvayam devi Rajnah
Mantroddharo varnito gopaniyah

Mantroddharah:
Taram maya manalah kamashakti
Madhyam chakhya bhagavatyai cha Rajniyai
Maya bijam (thadvayam?) devi Rajnah
Mantroddharo varnito gopaniyah

Abstract of *Mantra*:
Penetrating/sparkling marvelous power. Pay respect to the *Shakti* of desire and in the middle recite her name *Bhagavati* and *Rajni*. Seed of this marvelous (painful?) power is goddess *Rajni*. Abstract of the having been described has to be preserved.[31]

Abstract of the *Mantra*:
Pay respect to the *Shakti* of desire and in the middle recite her name *Bhagavati* and *Rajni*. This penetrating/sparkling marvelous power is goddess *Rajni*. This *Mantra* must be preserved.'

31 *Shlokas* 14 and 16 seem to give vague ideas of *Tantric sexo-yogic* rituals which do not make sense. Its Sanskrit is difficult to translate and apparently its meaning has been obscured. Consequently a clear translation is difficult.

15

श्री भैरव उवाच :-
श्री राज्ञी मूलमन्त्रस्य ऋषिः ब्रह्मा समीरितः
गायत्री छन्द ईशानि राज्ञी देवी च देवता ।

Shri Bhairava uvacha:
Shri Rajni mulamantrasya rishih Brahma samiritah
Gayatri chhanda Ishani Rajni devi cha devata

Shri-Bhairava-uvacha:
Shri-Rajni-mulamantrasya rishih Brahma samiritah
Gayatri-chhanda Ishani Rajni devi cha devata

The god *Bhairava* said, 'Of *Rajni*'s root *Mantra* the recitation is seer *Brahma* and *Gayatri* poem, oh lady, and the divinity *Devi Rajni.*

The god *Bhairava said, 'Shri Rajni*'s *Mantra* is derived by the seer *Brahma* from *Gayatri Mantra.*

16

माया बीजं शरच्छक्तिः कामः कीलक मीश्वरि
भोगाप वर्ग सिद्धयर्थे विनियोगः प्रकीर्तितः ।

Maya bijam sharachchhaktih kamah kilaka mishwari
Bhogapa varga siddhayarthe viniyogah Prakirtitah

Maya bijam sharachchhaktih kamah kilakam Ishwari
Bhogapa-varga-siddhayarthe viniyogah prakirtitah

The penetrating/sparkling power is arrow(autumn?) *Shakti*, nail desire *Ishwari*. Its application is famous in obtaining success in completion of spiritual/sexual enjoyment.[32]

The penetrating/sparkling power is an arrow. The *Shakti* of desire has to be nailed down. The completion of this spiritual/sexual application is famous in obtaining success.

32 Following the *shloka* 16 a daily ritual to be followed by the devotees is described.

17

ध्यान मस्याः प्रवक्ष्यामि सात्विकं कामना वहम्
सर्वसिद्धिप्रदे देवि ! मन्त्रकोटि फल प्रदम् ।

Dhyana masyah pravakshyami sattvikam kamana-vaham
Sarvasiddhiprade devi mantrakoti phala pradam

Dhyanam asyah pravakshyami sattvikam kamana-vaham
Sarvasiddhiprade devi mantrakoti-phala-pradam

I will proclaim her meditation in *Sattvikam* form fulfilling desires, oh *Devi* bestowing all kinds of successes, it is a *Mantra* of highest degree and it produces results.

It is a *Mantra* of the highest degree and produces results. I proclaim the meditation of the goddess in *Sattvika* form which bestows all kinds of successes.

18

उद्यत् दिवाकरसहस्ररुचिं त्रिनेत्रां
सिंहासनोपरिगतामुरगोपवीताम् ।
खड्गाम्बुजाढ्य कलशाममृतपात्र हस्तां
राज्ञीं भजामि विकसद्वदनारबिन्दाम् ॥

Udyat divakarasahasraruchim trinetram
Simhasanoparigatamuragopavitam
Khangambujadhya kalashamamritapatra hastam
Rajnim bhajami vikasadvadanarabindam

Udyat divakarasahasraruchim trinetram
Simhasanoparigatam uragopavitam
Khangambujadhya-kalashamamritapatra-hastam
Rajnim bhajami vikasadvadanarabindam

Elevated, shining like thousand suns, having three eyes, seated on the lion throne, surrounded by snakes, holding a cup, carrying sword and lotus, with an elixir container in her hand, I worship *Rajni* her face blossoming like lotus.

I worship *Maharajni* whose face is like blossomed lotus, who shines like thousand suns, having three eyes seated on a lion throne, surrounded by snakes and holding cup, sword, lotus and elixir container in her hands.

19

श्री भैरव–उवाच :–
नास्यान्तरायो न क्लेशो न विपर्यय धीः शिवे।
सर्वसिद्धिप्रदो देवि मन्त्रोऽयं भाग्य वर्धनः।

Shri Bhairava uvacha:
Nasyantarayo na klesho na viparyaya dhih Shive
Sarvasiddhiprado devi mantroyam bhagya vardhanah

Shri Bhairava uvacha:
Nasyantarayo na klesho na viparyaya-dhih Shive
Sarvasiddhiprado devi mantroyam bhagya-vardhanah

Neither is there any obstacle to it nor any distress, nor is there any opposition of thought. All is achieved by this *Mantra* and one's destiny prospers, *Shive*.

Through this *Mantra* all is achieved and one's destiny prospers. There is neither any obstacle nor any distress nor is there any opposition of thoughts.

20

मन्त्र मुत्कीलये द्देवि ततः संजीवयेन्मनुम् ।
सिद्धि मन्त्रं जपेद्देवि ततः संपुटितं चरेत् ।

Mantra mutkilaye ddevi tatah Samjivayenmanum
Siddhi mantram japeddevi tatah samputitam charet

Mantram utkilayed devi tatah samjivayen manum
Siddhi-mantram japed devi tatah samputitam charet

One should unloose the *Mantra* then it will give life to a person. *Devi*, by murmuring the *mantra* softly one is able to attain success.

By murmuring the *Mantra* one is able to attain success. If understood it can give new life.

21

ततो मन्त्रोथ मीशानि साक्षात्सिद्धि प्रदो भवेत् ।
यन्त्रोद्धारं प्रवक्ष्यामि सर्वाशा परि पूरकम् ।२१।

Tato mantroya mishani sakshatsiddhi prado bhavet
Yantroddharam pravakshyami sarvasha pari purakam

Tato mantroyam ishani sakshat siddhi-prado bhavet
Yantroddharam pravakshyami sarvasha-paripurakam

This *Mantra*, oh lady, produces real achievement. I will proclaim the *yantra*-abstract as fulfilling all kinds of hopes.

This *Mantra* produces real achievement and *Yantra* fulfills all kinds of hopes.

22 • 23

सर्वार्थ साधकं चक्रं सर्व सम्मोहनं तथा ।
बिन्दुस्त्र्यश्रं षडश्रं च वृत्ताष्टदल मण्डितम् ।
वृत्तत्रयं धरा सद्म राज्ञी श्री चक्र मीरितम ॥

Sarvartha sadhakam chakram sarva sammohanam tatha —
Bindustrayashram shadashram cha vrittashtadala manditam
Vrittatrayam dhara sadma Rajni Shri chakra miritam

Sarvartha-sadhakam chakram sarva-sammohanam tatha —
Bindus trayashram shadashram cha vrittashtadala-manditam
Vrittatrayam dharah-sadma Rajni Shri-chakram iritam

A circle fulfilling all kinds of desires (but if not done properly) it can completely delude. There is a point (surrounded by) a triangle and a hexagon which in turn is adorned with eight parts. This becomes the base of earth surrounded by three circles, *Rajni*'s diagram inspired.[33]

A circle fulfills all kinds of desires but if not done properly, it can delude. There is a point surrounded by a triangle and hexagon which in turn is adorned with eight parts. This becomes the base of earth surrounded by three circles.

33 Goddess *Maharajni*'s *Yantra* is based on this shloka or *vice versa*. The *yantra* is drawn at the end of the *mahatmya* text. From *shloka* 24 to 33 are described the specific positions of various goddesses and gods on the actual space of the *Yantra*. At the center is located *Maharajni*.

24

पञ्चाङ्ग मस्य देवेशि शृणु वै ह्यागमोद्धृतम् ।
यस्य श्रवण मात्रेण पूजायुत फलं लभेत् ।

Panchanga masya deveshi shrinu vai hyagamoddhritam
Yasya shravana matrena pujayuta phalam labhet

Panchangam asya deveshi shrinu vai hy agamoddhritam
Yasya shravana-matrena pujayuta-phalam labhet

Listen, I will tell you, *Deveshi*, its five limbed nature honored by tradition by mere listening of which one obtains the fruit arising from worship.

I will tell you the long honored traditional nature of the five limbs, by mere listening of which one can obtain fruit.

25

गणेशो भीमराजश्च कुमारो जाङ्गलेश्वरः ।
इन्द्राद्याः लोकपालाश्च पूजनीयाश्च भूगृहे ।

Ganesho bhimarajashcha kumaro jangaleshwarah
Indradyah lokapalashcha pujaniyashcha bhugrihe

Ganesho bhimarajashcha kumaro jangaleshwarah
Indradyah lokapalash cha pujaniyash cha bhugrihe

Ganesha and the king of the *Bhimas*, *Kumar*, *Jangaleshwara*. *Indra* and others and the guardians of the directions are to be worshiped in the underground chamber.

In the under ground chambers *Ganesh*, *Bhima*, *Kumar*, *Jangaleshwara*, *Indra* and other guardians of the directions are to be worshiped.

26

वृत त्रये पूजनीयं गुरुपङ्क्तित्रयं शिवे ।
दिव्य सिद्धोथ मत्यैघिगणा गन्धाक्षितैः प्रिये

Vrita traye pujaniyam gurupankitrayam Shive
Divya siddhotha matyaighigana gandhakshitaih Priye

Vrita-traye pujaniyam gurupankitrayam Shive
Divya-siddhotha matyaighi ganagandhakshitaih priye

In the three circles are fifteen highly respected persons to be worshiped *Shive*. By prayer may there be celestial accomplishment, with imperishable and non-odorous troops, beloved.

In the three circles fifteen highly respected persons are to be worshiped. May there be celestial accomplishments with imperishable and non-odorous troops.

27

वासुकिः नीलनागश्च तक्षकः पद्मनागकः ।
पूर्वादिदिक्षु संपूज्याः विदिक्षु शृण पार्वति

Vasukih nilanagashcha takshakah padmanagakah
Purvadidikshu sampujyah vidikshu shrina parvati

Vasukih nilanagash cha takshakah padmanagakah
Purvadidikshu sampujyah vidikshu shrina Parvati

Vasuki and *Nilanaga*, *Takshaka* and *Padmanaga* are to be worshiped in the eastern direction, listen Parvati.

In the eastern directions *Vasuki, Nilanaga, Takshaka* and *Padmanaga* are to be worshiped.

28

काकोटिकः शङ्खपालः कुलिकः शेष ईश्वरि ।
आग्नेय क्रमतः पूज्याः ब्रह्माद्याः मातरस्तथा ।

Kakotikah shankhapalah kulikah shesha Ishwari
Agneya kramatah pujyah Brahmadyah matarastatha

Kakotikah shankhapalah kulikah shesha Ishwari
Agneya-kramatah pujyah Brahmadyah mataras tatha

Frog (tortoise?) and the protector of the conch-shell, and such creatures, in turn, oh *Ishwari*, in the manner of *Agni*, *Brahma* and others and *mothers* also are to be worshiped.

Vishnu, Agni, Brahma, and mothers are also to be worshiped.

29

भैरवाद्याष्टौतु संपूज्या: वामावर्तेन पार्वति ।
ब्राह्मी च वैष्णवी चैव रुद्राणी चापराजिता ।

Bhairavadyashtautu sampujyah vamavartena Parvati
Brahmi cha vaishnavi chaiva Rudrani chaparajita
Bhairavadyashtau tu sampujyah vamavartena Parvati
Brahmi cha vaishnavi chaiva Rudrani chaparajita

And eight (*matrikas?*) *Bhairavi* and others, are to be honored by turning to the west direction, oh *Parvati*, *Vaishnavi*, *Rudrani* and the unconquered one.

In the west direction *Bhairavi, Parvati, Vaishnavi, Rudrani,* and the unconquered one are to be honored.

30 • 31

कौमारी चैव चामुण्डा वाराही नारसिंहिका ।
असिताङ्गों रुरुश्चण्ड: क्रोधी चोन्मेत्त भीषणा: ।

कपालेशश्च संहार: पूजनीय: यथा क्रमम् ।
श्री दुर्गा शारिका देवी वैष्णवी च शिवा प्रिये ।

Kaumari chaiva chamunda varahi narasimhika
Asitangom rurushchandah krodhi chonmetta Bhishanah
Kapaleshashcha samharah pujaniyah yatha kramam
Shri durga, sarika devi vaishnavi cha Shiva priye

Kaumari chaiva chamunda varahi narasimhika
Asitangom rurush chandah krodhi chonmetta-Bhishanah
Kapaleshash cha samharah pujaniyah yatha-kramam
Shri-durga sarika devi vaishnavi cha Shiva priye

Kumari and *Chamunda*, *Varahi* and *Narasimhika*. Dark limbed *Ruru*—wrathful, angry, frenzied and terrible lord of skulls, the destroyer, is to be honored in due order. *Durga*, *Sarika*, *Devi Vaishnavi*, and *Shiva*'s wife, oh beloved.

In the proper order are to be honored *Kumari*, *Chamunda*, *Varahi*, *Narasimhika*, *Ruru* (dark limbed, wrathful, angry, frenzied and terrible) along with *Durga*, *Sarika*, *Vaishnavi* and *Uma*.

32

वालिका त्रिपुरा चैव वामावर्त्ते षडश्रके ।
लक्ष्मी सरस्वती बाला पूजनोया त्रिकोणके ।

Valika tripura chaiva vamavartte shadashrake
Lakshmi saraswati bala pujaniya trikonake

Valika tripura chaiva vamavartte shadashrake
Lakshmi saraswati bala pujamniya trikonake.

Maiden *Tripura* in the west direction, in the six-sided figure; *Lakshmi*, *Saraswati*, *Bala* are to be honored in the triangle.

In the west direction in the six-sided figure are to be honored *Tripura, Lakshmi, Saraswati* and *Bala*.

33

बिन्दौ राजमप्रदा राज्ञी विद्या पञ्चदशाक्षरी ।
फलप्रदं महेशानि पञ्चाङ्गमिदंमीरितम् ।

Bindau rajmaprada Rajni vidya panchadashakshari
Phalapradam maheshani panchangamidammiritam

Bindau rajmaprada Rajni vidya panchadashakshari
Phalapradam maheshani panchangam idam miritam

In the point is *Rajni* the giver of ten kingdoms, the knower, the one of the fifteen words, when the one of five limbs is recited it gives fruit, *Maheshwari*.

In the point is to be honored the knower of the fifteen words, giver of the kingdom *Rajni*.'

34

श्री भैरव उवाच

खड्ग' पद्म' सुधापात्रं घटं भूतेश्वरं वटुम् ।
योगिन्याः क्षेत्रपालौच पूजयेत फल प्राप्तये ॥

Shri Bhairava uvacha:
Khangam padmam sudhapatram ghatam bhuteshwaram vatum
Yoginyah kshetrapalaucha pujayeta phala praptaye

Shri Bhairava uvacha:
Khangam padmam sudhapatram ghatam bhuteshwaram vatum
Yoginyah kshetrapalau cha pujayet phala-praptaye

The god *Bhairava* said, 'One should worship sword, lotus, elixir container, vessel and the lad *Bhuteshwara* and the *Yoginis* together with the two guardians of directions in order to achieve success.'

Bhairava concluded, 'One should worship sword, lotus, elixir container and vessel, and lad **Bhuteshwara**, and **Yoginis**, together with the two guardians of directions in order to achieve success.'

35

प्रसीद परदेवते ! मम हृदि प्रभूतं तमो
विदारय, दरिद्रतां दलय, देहि सर्वज्ञताम् ।
विधेहि करुणानिधे चरण पद्म युग्मं स्वकं
विदारित जरा मृतिं त्रिपुर-सुन्दरि ! श्री शिवे !

Prasida paradevate mama hridi prabhutam tamo
Vidaraya daridratam dalaya dehi sarvajnatam
Vidhehi karunanidhe charana padma yugmam svakam
Vidarita jara mritim tripura-sundari Shri Shive

Prasida paradevate mama hridi prabhutam tamo
Vidaraya daridratam dalaya dehi sarvajnatam
Vidhehi karunanidhe charana-padma-yugmam svakam
Vidarita-jara-mritim Tripura-sundari Shri-Shive

Be propitious, great divinity, destroy the darkness in my heart, destroy the poverty, give knowledge of all. Embodiment of compassion, make manifest your two lotus like feet, the destruction of old age and death. *Tripurasundari*, lovely consort of *Shiva*.

Tripurasundari, lovely consort of *Shiva*, embodiment of compassion, be propitious, destroy the darkness in my heart, poverty, destruction, old age and death, give knowledge to all, great divinity.

36

कल्याणि राज्ञि जगदीश्वरि विश्वमातः
त्वामन्तरेण नहि देवि सुखं जनस्य ।
पुत्रस्य दुःख हरणे सततोद्यता द्राक्
मातैव हि स्नुत कुचा नु भवत्यवश्यम् ॥

Kalyani Rajni jagadishwari vishvamatah
Tvamantarena nahi devi sukham janasya
Putrasya duhkha harane satatodyata drak
Mataiva hi snuta kucha nu Bhavatyavashyam

Kalyani Rajni jagadishwari vishvamatah
Tvam antarena na hi devi sukham janasya
Putrasya duhkha-harane satatodyata drak
Mataiva hi snuta-kucha nu Bhavaty avashyam

Kalyani, Rajni, Jagat Ishwari—mother of the whole universe without you people have no happiness, always ready in order to instantly eliminate the grief of the sons. She is indeed mother with the flowing breasts..

Kalyani, Rajni, Jagat Ishwari you are the mother of the whole universe. You are always ready to eliminate the grief of your sons. She is the mother with the flowing breasts without whom people have no happiness.

37

आकाशे चण्डिका देवी पाताले भुवनेश्वरी ।
मर्त्ये लोके जया देवी पायात् त्रिपुर-सुन्दरी ॥

Akashe chandika-devi patale bhuvaneshwari
Martya loke jayadevi payat tripura-sundari

Akashe chandika devi patale bhuvaneshwari
Martya-loke jayadevi payat tripura-sundari

In the sky is *Devi Chandika*, under the earth *Bhuvaneshwari*, in the world of humans may *Jayadevi Tripurasundari* protect us.

In the sky is *Devi Chandika*, under the earth *Bhuvaneshwari*, and in the world of humans is *Tripurasundari*, may she protect us.

Shri Maharajni Vishuddha-Shrichakram

(Pure Auspicious Yantra of *Shri Maharajni*)

Hymn

1

बिन्दौराज्य प्रदाराज्ञी
विद्या पञ्चदशाक्षरी ।

Bindaurajya Pradarajni
Vidya panchadashakshari

Bindau rajya-prada rajni
Vidya panchadashakshari

In the *bindu*, power giving *Rajni*. Having knowledge of fifteen words.

2

भूगहे वृत्तत्रय नाग पत्र-
षडारयोत्यश्रक बिन्दु बिम्बे ।
निषेदुषींराजकुलाधि देवी
राज्ञीं भजे राजकलावतंसाम् ॥

Bhugahe vrittatraya naga patra
Shadarayonyashraka bindu bimbe
Nishedushimrajakuladhi devi
Rajnim bhaje rajakalavatamsam

Bhugahe vrittatraya-naga—patraa
Shadarayonjyashraka-bindu-bimbe
Nishedushim rajakuladhi-devim
Rajnim bhaje rajakalavatamsam

Three circles of the earth, snake, leaf with six *Yoni*-angles in the reflection of the dot. Seated supreme divinity of a royal race, goddess I worship thee possessor of a crescent ornament.

3

विन्दुस्त्र्यश्रं षडश्रंच
वृत्ताष्ट दल मण्डितम् ।
वृत्त त्रयं धरा सद्म
राज्ञी श्रीचक्रमीरितम् ।।

Bindustryashram shadashramcha
Vrittashta dala manditam
Vritta trayam dhara sadma
Rajni shrichakramiritam

Bindustryashram shadashram cha
Vrittashta-dala-manditam
Vritta-trayam-dhara-sadma
Rajni-shrichakram iritam

There is a point (surrounded by), a triangle and a hexagon which in turn is adorned with eight parts. This becomes the base of earth surrounded by three circles, aroused by *Rajni*.

4

राज्यप्रदं भक्तिकरं
सर्व शत्रु निबर्हणम् ।
पञ्चाङ्ग मखिलं देव्या
गोपनीयं प्रयत्नतः ।।

Rajyapradam bhaktikaram
Sarva shatru nibarhanam
Panchanga makhilam devya
Gopaniyam prapatnatah

Rajyapradam bhaktikaram
Sarva-shatru-nibarhanam
Panchangam akhilam devya
Gopaniyam prapatnatah

Giver of the kingdom, producer of devotion, destroyer of all the enemies. The complete *Mantra* of the goddess, with fifteen syllables, is to be preserved by the devotees.

5

श्री महाराज्ञी मन्त्रम्
ॐ ह्रीं श्रीं रां क्लीं सौ भगवत्यै
राज्ञ्यै ह्रीं स्वाहा ॥

Shri Maharajni mantram
Om hrim shrim ram klim sau
Bhagavatyai Rajnyai hrim svaha

Shri-Maharajni-mantram
Om hrim shrim ram klim sau
Bhagavatyai Rajnyai hrim svaha

Mantra of *Maharajni* is *Aum hrim shrim ram klim sau* to the blessed goddess *hrim svaha.*

त्रिपदा गायत्री :-

TRIPADA GAYATRI

(*Three Line Poem*)

5

ॐ राज्य प्रदायै विद्महे
पञ्चदशाक्षर्यै धीमहि
तन्नो राज्ञी प्रचोदयात् ।

Om Rajya Pradayai vidmahe
Panchadashaksharyai dhimahi
Tanno Rajni Prachodayat

Om Rajya-pradayai vidmahe
Panchadashaksharyai dhimahi
Tan no Rajni Prachodayat

Aum, we meditate upon the kingdom giving one, we contemplate the fifteen worded one, therefore may *Rajni* inspire us.

Interpretation of the Mahatmya

In order to further clarify the meaning of the *Mahatmya* text following are the outlines of the First and Second Renderings, the Homage and their interpretation.

The Outline of the First Rendering

Long ago there lived a demon *Ravana*[34] who invoked the terrible form of *Shiva Bhairava* by performing penance for a hundred thousand years. *Bhairava* appeared but advised him to worship the virgin goddess *Khir Bhavani*, who was greater than him, had a fifteen lettered *mantra*, and surpassed all the three *gunas*, the great goddess *Shyama/Kali.*

The great souled *Ravana* worshiped the great goddess *Shyama/Kali* for ten thousand years. Pleased, she appeared to him and granted him a boon. *Ravana* invited her to live in his home. She agreed. From then onwards she lived as the goddess *Shyama* on the southern island kingdom of Lanka. Here the demon devotee worshiped her using human, buffalo, and alcohol as ritual sacrifice. At first, the *Tamasi* goddess accepted such demonic offerings. Eventually she became disgusted and decided to ascend toward the northern valley of Kashmir. Guided by *Hanuman*, the goddess came to the valley of Kashmir with countless *nagas* (serpents). Entering the valley from the *Pir Panjal* mountains, the goddess journeyed through sacred sites like Vishnupada, Divasathal, Martand, Anantanaga and other sacred places, circum-ambulating the whole valley before settling down at the sacred *naga* (spring) in the swamps of Tulmul near the confluence of the rivers Sindh and Jhelum (Vitasta). Here she became known as the *Sattvika* goddess *Maharajni Khir Bhavani*. She stayed there in a state of constant spiritual bliss, accepting only *Sattvika* offerings of milk, sugar, and butter.

By worshiping and meditating upon the great goddess seers obtain salvation, and all the wishes of her devotees come true. Whoever recites her *Mantra* and meditates on her *Yantra*, can certainly achieve *Shiva*-hood.

The Outline of the Second Rendering

Ravana did a great penance for ten thousand years which is difficult even for the gods. Pleased, *Brahma* granted *Ravana* the kingdom of Lanka on one condition that he could rule Lanka until the birth of goddess *Sita*.

Ravana continued his penance to please *Shiva*. The Great God granted boons to the demon, which pleased him. Arrogant in his strength, *Ravana* decided to destroy all the seers, people, and gods; he felt concern only for the happiness of the demons. In order to protect good souls and destroy the demons, *Vishnu* was incarnated on the earth as king *Rama*. The king, along with his wife *Sita*, went to Lanka in order to kill *Ravana*.

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34 In the epic *Ramayana*, the demon *Ravana* is a devotee of *Shiva*.

Mandodari, *Ravana*'s wife, cautioned him that *Rama* was a devotee of *Shyama/Kali*.[35] So, *Ravana* decided to invite *Rama* to the sacred arena at his island home where *Shyama/Kali* was enshrined, and sacrifice him to the goddess. When *Rama* and *Sita* appeared in the middle of the worshiping area, *Ravana*, with a terrible look, pronounced to *Rama* that if he wanted to stay alive he should leave *Sita* and go home, otherwise he would be sacrificed to the goddess. *Rama* refused to leave and said, "I will destroy you and then take *Sita and Shyama* home." *Ravana* became very angry. He took out his sword and ran to attack *Rama*. A terrible war was fought. By now the angry goddess *Shyama*, her voice thundering like clashing clouds, said to *Ravana*, "Shame on you! I am going to the valley of Kashmir in the Himalayas and I vow to follow vegetarianism".[36] Hearing her, *Rama* asked *Hanuman*, the foremost of his devotees, the epitome of sexual renunciation, to take the Great Goddess to Kashmir. *Shyama* rode on the back of *Hanuman* and reached the village of Tulmul.

The next day *Ravana* affected by fear, was killed by *Rama*. In the heaven the instruments were played, troupes of *Apsaras* danced and showers of flowers fell on the earth.

The Outline of the Homage

Shiva was sitting on the Shail peak, wearing an elephant skin on his body and half moon in his crown. His eyes looked terrible. He laughed, recited and read over and over the *Mantra* of the goddess. His wife *Uma* asked him, "Lord please tell me why do you continuously murmur this prayer?" After much cajoling by his wife *Shiva* replied, "I recite fifteen worded knowledge which is esoteric, unrevealed and supreme and belongs to the goddess *Shyama/Kali* who is also called *Maharajni*. She is from the family of highest *Brahmins* and is the kingdom bestowing goddess of knowledge and the destroyer of calamities and poverty."

Having heard her husband, *Uma* implored him to tell her the Real Essence of his goddess. *Shiva* replies, "Listen attentively, I will tell you the whole secret of the divinity which is difficult even for the gods to get. After you hear this *Mantra* you must protect its secrecy. The *Mantra* of the great goddess by which one can achieve success is...". Thus *Shiva* narrates the Abstract of the *Mantra* of the goddess (*Shlokas* 14–16). He adds that the *Mantra* which is of the highest degree produces excellent results and must be protected.

Shiva further describes the goddess's iconic image and her geometric diagram as follows:

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35 In the epic *Ramayana* of Valmiki, *Rama* is the worshiper of *Surya*, the sun god. In the present *Mahatmya* which is inspired by the Bengali version of the Epic by Kirtivasha, *Rama* is portrayed as the devotee of the goddess *Kali*.
The first Kashmiri version of the epic *Ramayana* was written in 1847 by Pandit Prakash Ram (c. 1819–1885). He was an ardent devotee of Tripurasundari. The Kashmiri Ramayana is known as *Ramavatar Charita* and was first published in 1910 in Srinagar. In this version Rama worships Shiva & Uma.

36 The goddess is here called *Vaishnavi* which indicates that she is a vegetarian. Vegetarianism is associated with qualities such as purity, transparency, peace and goodness (*Sattvika guna*).

Her image shines like thousand suns. She has three eyes, she sits on the lion throne, is surrounded by snakes, holds a cup, sword, lotus and an elixir container in her four hands. Her *Yantra* is a point surround by a triangle and a hexagon which in turn is adorned with eight parts. This becomes the base of earth surrounded by three circles. By reciting her *Mantra*, meditating on her *Yantra* and worshiping her iconic image all hopes and desires are fulfilled.

Striving for Excellence

The three human attributes (*Gunas*) are *Tamas*, the darkness of ignorance which binds human with delusion, numbness, and lethargy; *Rajas*,[37] the passion which persuades humans to crave for possessions and pleasure; and *Sattvas*, the lucidity which coaxes us to search for experience and bliss. In the two Renderings and the Homage (making three consecutive sections of the text) *Tamas* is characterized by *Ravana* and *Shyama*, *Rajas* by *Shyama/Kali* and *Sita* and *Sattvas* by *Khir Bhavani*.

In the First Rendering, *Shiva Bhairava* retires himself by saying, 'My strength is *Shyama*' (*Sl.* 17) and gives the goddess the mandate of guarding the valley. *Tamasi Ravana* worships the *Tamasi* goddess (*Sl.* 28 & 30) who gives him a boon. She accepts to live in his house and receives demonic (*Tamasi*) offerings such as buffaloes, alcohol and humans. The character of the demon king *Ravana* is dark (*Tamasi*). The qualities of arrogance and avarice have overtaken him and yet he has the potential of becoming good and true (*Sattvika*).

In the Second Rendering The characters of *Shyama/Kali* express *Rajasi Guna*. *Rama* and *Sita* are brought into the narrative to defeat *Ravana*. The persons of *Sita* and *Shyama/Kali* are juxtaposed and interchanged (*Sl.* 55 & 60) when referring to their angry and passionate nature (*Rajasi Guna*) (*Sl.* 57-58). Then the two goddesses are separated. While *Sita* goes to Ayodhya with *Rama*, *Shyama/Kali* goes to Kashmir seated on the back of *Hanuman*. The goddess who is referred to as a (*Sl.* 6, 53 & 61, First Rendering) vows to become the virgin and vegetarian goddess *Khir Bhavani* (*Sl.* 59). From the level of Tamas as Shyama/Kali she rises to the level of Rajas as Sita. She moves towards north leaving *Ravana* and her *Shyama* form in the south.

Hanuman, the foremost devotee of *Rama*, is a passionate devotee. He symbolizes chastity and sexual abstinence. The virtues of chastity and sexual abstinence express control over seminal fluids and the chaotic mind. Here the symbolism of sattvas is evoked in the mind of the reader when *Hanuman* becomes the *vahana* of the goddess. During the liminal period of her ascend, from the meat eating (referring to buffalo and human sacrifice) and alcohol drinking goddess *Shyama/Kali* to the virgin and vegetarian *Maharajni Khir Bhavani*, he is her *vahana* and thus an important agent in her transformation from Rajas to sattvas.

The goddess *Khir Bhavani* is described both, as *Tripurasundari* having all the three *gunas*: *Sattva, Rajas* and *Tamas* and as *Sattvika* goddess who dwells in the marshy land of Tulmul having

37 The word *Rajas* is further related to *rakta*, red color or blood as well as *raga*, passion.

exclusively *Sattvika* attributes. The three stages are thus paradigmatic of the spiritual ascend of a devotee or a *Tantric* initiate.

The proper understanding of the *Mahatmya* makes the devotee realize that her geographic ascend from the southern country of Shri Lanka to the northern valley of Kashmir is a metaphor for a psychological/spiritual pilgrimage and progress. The journey is congruent with the physical journey of a devotee's dormant inner power, the *Kundalini Shakti*, from the base of the spinal cord (the south of *Sadhaka*'s body) to the cranium at the top of the head (the north of the body). The whole *Mahatmya* traces the awakening of the dormant serpent power in each individual.

Her ascent from the south to the north of India is not a geographic ascent but symbolizes the spiritual ascent from the state of *Tamas*, through the state of *Rajas*, to the final state of *Sattvas*. *Ravana* becomes tantamount to a religious initiate who may by nature be idle or irate (*Tamasi*), restless or excited (*Rajasi*) before ascending to a level of goodness and purity (*Sattvika*). Such an elevated state is possible through the physical and mental discipline.

In third section, the Homage, *Bhairava*, the Great ascetic (*Mahayogi*) is deeply absorbed in the recitation of the goddess *Maharajni*'s *Mantra*. He is in a state of contemplative emotion. Here the *Tantric* aspect of the goddess *Khir Bhavani* is revealed (*Sl.*11). *Shiva Bhairava* proclaims her to be an esoteric and unrevealed goddess and the personification of supreme insight and wisdom.

Textual Transplanting of the Rama Tradition

Through the two renderings of the *Mahatmya*, *Rama* cult is slowly grafted into the myth of *Maharajni Khir Bhavani*. In the First Rendering of the myth the potent symbol of *Hanuman*, the foremost devotee of *Rama*, is introduced. Nothing is said about *Rama* or *Sita* but the goddess *Maharajni* is designated as the one 'who grants *Ramarajya*' and 'who was guided by *Hanuman*' (*Sl.* 32 & 33). In the Second Rendering *Sita*, the wife of Shri *Rama* is brought into the narrative. She is then superimposed with the personality of *Shyama/Kali/Maharajni*. Thus the cult of *Rama* is slowly grafted onto the cult of *Khir Bhavani* through the back door so to speak.

Rama is introduced into the myth as a king incarnated on the earth for the sole purpose of destroying the *Tamasi* demon *Ravana*. As predicted by *Brahma* as soon as *Sita* 'is born' *Ravana* would be killed and this does happen. Other reasons for his death are indirectly expressed through his pride, arrogance and evil thoughts. *Narada*, the messenger of the god recommends the recitation of *Mantra*, an important *Tantric* component of *Sadhana*, to no avail. *Ravana* blinded by his *Tamas* qualities continues his vigorous penance through *Hatha Yoga*, and is killed eventually.

Making of the Mahatmya

There is evidence to indicate that the *Mahatmya* was written during the late nineteenth century. It was not written on birch bark but paper which was introduced in the valley in the seventeenth century. This limits the date of our text sometimes between the seventeenth to the end of the nineteenth century. It is possible, however, that the legends it describes were passed down orally

through generations. When it was written down, however, new myths and rituals were incorporated according to the changed historical circumstances.

The name Tulmul temple and the goddess' epithet *Maharajni* appears for the first time in Walter Lawrence's gazetteer written in 1895, and in the Introduction to Aurel Stein's translation of Kalhana's *Rajatarangini* published in 1900. The appellation *Maharajni* was an ancient name of the goddess. This particular name was picked up because it made sense within the times. The great empress *(Maharajni)* Queen Victoria of England was deeply loved and respected by Kashmiris. The second half of her name, *Khir Bhavani* meaning 'goddess who originated from *Khir*' was initiated by the historic fact of Swami Vivekananda's *Khir* offerings in his daily ritual of worshiping a virgin daughter of the local temple priest.[38] The tradition of offering *Khir* to the Spring has remained upto the present.

It is quite possible that the *Mahatmya* was written simultaneously at the time of the consecration of the temple of *Maharajni Khir Bhavani* which was built during the reign of *Maharaja* Pratap Singh (1885–1926). Aurel Stein gives us ample examples of such a practice. He informs us that when a particular temple was built and consecrated, within a short period of time, based on both relevant historical incidents and the sacred literature, *Mahatmyas* were especially composed for the new temple and its presiding deity. These texts extolled and expanded the exploits of the goddess. A newly created *Mahatmya* in no time would become a popular *Mahatmya* among the *Purohits* of Shrinagar.[39] A new scripture would include local legends, ancient topographical names, oral myths, and extracts from the old *Puranas* and *Mahatmyas*.[40]

Thus when Maharaja Pratap Singh was enthroned in 1885 no scripture of *Khir Bhavani* was extant. The marble island temple was non existent and no iconic images were created as yet. The goddess had yet to jell and acquire a form. The Maharaja acknowledged this significant opportunity. Thus, by consulting with some prominent *Brahmins* and with the help of scribes, a *Mahatmya* was written which solidified the legitimacy and authority of a new goddess. Soon a marble temple was constructed and iconic image developed.

The story of the development of the iconic images of the goddess *Khir Bhavani* is as fascinating as the emergence of her *Mahatmya*. The next chapter discusses the making of her visual images and their relationship with the images of other Hindu goddesses.

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38 Swami Vivekananda, a nineteenth century Hindu reformist is believed to have visited Kashmir in 1887. He is reported to have spent a week at the *Tulmul Naga* in meditation. Every morning he offered *Khir*, a dish made out of rice, sugar and milk, to an unmarried (virgin) daughter of a local *Brahmin*. See R.C. Majumdar: 1965, p.276 and Nikhilananda: 1953, p.340. The tradition of offering *Khir* to the Spring has remained upto the present.

39 Stein *Rajatarangini*, Vol. II, Ch II, Sec. vi, 376–383.

40 Ibid. fn.152.

chapter

3

THE VISUAL IMAGES

Iconic Representations

The most important aspect of the visual images of the goddess *Maharajni Khir Bhavani* are her posture (*Asana*) and the seat (also known as *Asana*). The early twentieth century images (c.1900–1920's) show her seated in *Vajraparyankasana Yogic* posture (commonly known as the lotus posture). In this pose she sits with her legs crossed, her feet upturned and resting on opposite thighs. She sits frontally on a seat made of lotus flower (with thousand petals) placed on a hexagonal throne (figs. 5, 6 & 7). In her later paintings, (c. 1930's–1950's) however, her posture and seat is selectively replaced by a more contemporary style (figs. 10 & 11). Her seat is a lion and her *Tantric* posture is substituted by *Lalitasana*, the royal ease pose. She is shown seated elegantly on a lion vehicle. Her right foot rests on the left leg while the left leg is dangling. This pose is the same as the posture of the goddess *Durga* in the late nineteenth century Punjabi and Bengali popular art. The paintings where the Tantric throne is depicted with a lion seated in front belong to the transitional period (figs. 6 & 7).

In the *Mahatmya* the visual images of the goddess are given verbal form:

Elevated, shining like thousand suns, having three eyes,
Seated on the lion throne, surrounded by snakes,
Holding a cup, carrying sword and lotus,
with an elixir container in her hands,
I worship Rajni her face blossoming like lotus.

Your eyes are like the moon, the newly risen sun, or fire.
Having four arms you are seated on a seat,
carrying conch shell, lotus, sword and trident,
consort of Mahesha, I worship you Rajni
in the form of mountains of snow (Himalayas).

Khir Bhavani's hexagonal throne is not described in a separate stanza but makes an important component of the description of her geometric form, *Yantra* in the *Mahatmya*.

Throughout the *Mahatmya* the goddess *Khir Bhavani* is designated various names viz: *Shyama, Rajni* and *Maharajni*. A name allocated to her in the sacred text is *Tripurasundari* (6 times), the name of a most prominent *Tantric* goddess.

The *Tantric* goddess *Bhairavi Aghoreshwari* (also known as *Tripurasundari*), is always depicted as seated in *Vajraparyankasana* posture on a thousand petalled lotus placed on a hexagon. What is the connection of *Khir Bhavani*, seated on a similar seat, with the goddess *Bhairavi Aghoreshwari* (*Tripurasundari*), and why have *Khir Bhavani*'s seat and posture been replaced in her later images? These are intriguing questions which will be brought to light in this chapter. Before doing that, however, we need to look briefly at the Kashmiri *Tantric* images and their religious meanings.

Kashmiri *Tantrism and Tantric Art*

In Kashmiri Shaivism the Ultimate Reality *Parama-Shiva*, has two aspects, *Shiva* and *Shakti*. While *Shakti* is female, immanent, dynamic and active; its male aspect *Shiva* is considered transcendent, static and passive. The entire universe comes to existence by the dynamic activity of *Shakti*. On the microcosmic level *Shakti* is represented by coiled serpent (*Kundalini*). She symbolizes Cosmic Energy and is at the same time the supreme force in *Yogi*'s subtle body. She lies dormant at the base of the spinal cord of a *Tantric Yogi*. Through appropriate discipline, the serpent power (*Kundalini Shakti*) rises through the seven energy centers (*Chakras*), usually represented as lotuses. The increasing number of lotus petals, in ascending order, indicate the rising energy of the respective *Chakra*, each functioning as a 'transformer' of energies from one potency to another.[1] The journey of *Kundalini* power starts from the first energy center, *Muladhara* and culminates in the seventh energy center, *Sahasara* where she unites with *Parma-Shiva* in the cranium of the *Yogi*. The union of *Shakti* and *Shiva* unfold as the divine essence and showers the aspirant with the Eternal Bliss. The unfolding of essence is symbolized as the lotus with thousand petals. Which is pictured as the seat of Shakti.

Iconographically, as in the *Yantra* of *Khir Bhavani* (fig 12), the hexagonal shape is developed from two intersecting triangles, one pointing upwards and another downwards, symbolizing the union of the male and female. The upward pointing triangle symbolizes male aspect of the supreme reality, *Parama-Shiva* and the downward pointing triangle symbolizes its female aspect, *Shakti*. The throne of *Shakti* is thus always represented as a hexagon symbolizing the eternal unity of *Shiva-Shakti*.[2] On the macrocosmic level *Shiva* without *Shakti* becomes *Sava*—

1 Mookerjee, Ajit. *Kundalini: The Arousal of the Inner Energy*, Clarion Books, Delhi. 1982, p.39.
2 See Madhu Khanna *Yantra: The Tantric Symbol of Cosmic Unity*, Thames and Hudson, London. 1979.

the inauspicious dead body. 'She is to be understood as *Shiva*'s dynamic form. His passivity constitutes not real or permanent duality, because in essence the goddess is his activity and his passivity is her inactivity.'[3] This aspect of *Shiva-Shakti* image is shown as *Shakti* in her full glory, holding all her emblems, seated in a *Yogic* posture on the supine body of *Shiva*. He is depicted as lying on a full blossomed lotus placed on a hexagonal seat. The *Shakti*, as *Bhairavi Aghoreshwari (Tripurasundari)* is represented as seated on such a seat.

Such images of *Bhairavi Aghoreshwari* were inspired by ancient Kashmiri art. Although we do not have any extant examples of ancient Kashmiri painting, existing mural paintings of Ladakh, a mountainous region of Kashmir state, give us some impression of how they might have looked. The colors and symbolic imagery of paintings of *Bhairavi Aghoreshwari* (figs. 8 & 9) reverberate the spectrum of color and form from the Ladakh murals.

The art historian Susan Huntington writes that the mural paintings of the Buddhist temple of Sumtsek at Alchi in Ladakh (c.11 C.E.) reflect Kashmiri influence. The murals at the temple virtually shimmer with the warmth of green, yellow, red, blue, black and white. The paintings seem to be painted in Kashmiri style in which images are sharply defined and the emphasis is on muscular physique. The waist is narrow and hips broad. The typical facial features include the high arching brows, wide inward looking eyes, curved lips, and a narrow chin. One of the most interesting image is that of *Prajnaparamita-Tara* on the south wall of the first story of Sum-tsek temple.[4] She too is depicted as seated in the *Tantric* posture of *Vajraparyankasana*.

Tantric Goddess Bhairavi Aghoreshwari (*Tripurasundari*)

The Kashmiri miniature paintings of *Bhairavi Aghoreshwari* and mural paintings of *Prajnaparamita-Tara* in Ladakh are remote prototypes for *Khir Bhavani* images.

In one image (fig. 8) *Bhairavi Aghoreshwari*, the supreme goddess is depicted as seated in *Vajraparyankasana*, which symbolizes the blissful state in which she eternally resides. The lotus is placed on *Sadashiva*'s supine body which in turn is placed on a hexagonal seat. She sits against a cushion wearing a crown over her open hair. The red goddess has three eyes. She is topless but dons a long skirt. The upper part of her body is covered with necklaces, one of which is made out of a serpent. Her image is sheltered by a golden decorative umbrella (*Chhattra*) hanging from the middle of a canopy. Her back is towards a lotus-filled pond. Her four hands hold a hook, a noose, a bow and a cluster of arrows. The bows and arrows denote

3 Beane, Wendell C. Myths, *Cults and Symbols in Sakta Hinduism: A Study of the Indian Mother Goddess*, E.J. Brill, Leiden, Netherlands, 1977. p.260.

4 Huntington, Susan. *The Art of Ancient India*, Weather Hill, New York, 1985. pp. 374–385. In the same text see color plate 19, *Prajnaparamita-Tara*, Sum-tsek Mural, Kashmiri Style, c. Mid-eleventh Century, Alchi, Ladakh, Jammu & Kashmir.

the power of her will. Her noose or lasso, which catches wild animals and demons, denotes knowledge and the hook denotes action.[5]

At the bottom of her seats are the meticulously painted gods *Brahma, Vishnu, Shiva* and *Ishana* (another form of *Shiva*) paying their homage to her. The ornamental borders framing the miniature paintings seem to be inspired by the decorative designs on the Mughal carpets. Alexis Sanderson's description about Kashmiri goddess *Bhairavi Aghoreshwari* as being enthroned on *Sadashiva* as the principal recipient of worship is literally portrayed in this painting.

The goddess's canopied throne is located in her Jeweled island (*Manidvipa*) which is believed to lay in the ocean of nectar, where perfumed flowers and trees bloom, and lakes and rivers flow.[6] Here such surrounding are suggested with lotus filled lake and blooming climbers in the background. She symbolizes pure consciousness and transcendence.

In yet another miniature painting of the goddess *Bhairavi Aghoreshwari* she sits under a crescent canopy (fig. 9). She is depicted in red and the same posture as the goddess in the previous painting. A tri-fold screen is at her back. She wears a jeweled crown with her open hair hanging down to her waist. In Hindu social context women's loose hair reflects paradoxical qualities of power and pollution. On one hand it suggests the goddess' independence; on the other it is a sign of impurity (which also is the power of the goddess).[7] The four gods, *Brahma, Vishnu, Shiva* and *Ishana* as posts of her throne, and stretched-out corpse of *Sadashiva* (on which she is seated) makeup her throne of five corpses (*Panchapretasana*). At the lower section of the painting some minor deities (left) and devotees (right) pay their homage to the goddess with folded hands. She is seated in the lotus posture on the Tantric throne conveying her position and power to the onlookers.

Such were the paintings which inspired the early paintings of *Maharajni Khir Bhavani*. In the *Mahatmya* the goddess *Khir Bhavani* as *Shyama* is described as carrying the emblems of *Bhairavi Aghoreshwari:* in her four hands she carries noose, hook or goad, bow and arrows or a trident.[8] As emblems are one of the major clues to identify a deity *Shyama* at once can be identified as *Bhairavi Aghoreshwari*. In addition many other iconographic details used to represent *Khir Bhavani* are the same as those of the goddess *Bhairavi Aghoreshwari*. Both the goddesses have canopies on their heads, jeweled crowns, three eyes, open hair, serpent encircling their necks. They are seated in lotus posture on the hexagonal seat. To the right of

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5 Ibid. Zimmer, 1974, pp. 201–204.

6 See C. Mackenzie Brown, *The Devī Gita, The Song of the Goddess: A Translation, Annotation, and Commentary*, State University of New York Press. 1998. "Introduction".

7 Many Hindu women keep their hair open during their menstruation and during the time of mourning. Moreover, whereas the unmarried girls may keep their hair flowing, married women must keep their hair tied up. Loose hair reflects freedom and the tied hair signifies control and dependence.

8 *Mahatmya Shrí Shrí Maharajní Pradurbhava*, First Rendering, *Shloka*: 27.

the *Tantric* goddess is depicted *Vishnu* and to her left *Shiva* reminding one of the same juxtaposition as in fig. 5 of these gods with the goddess *Khir Bhavani.*

It is evident from the comparative analysis of the textual and visual images of *Bhairavi Aghoreshwari* and *Khir Bhavani* that as *Shyama* the latter is identified as the former goddess. *Bhairavi Aghoreshwari*, who inspired *Khir Bhavani*'s images is always depicted with four hands. Her seat is the supine body of *Shiva* lying on a full blossomed lotus placed on a hexagonal seat. *Khir Bhavani* too has four hands, sits on a hexagonal/lotus *Yogic* seat but the corpse of *Sadashiva* is omitted because he is absent from her new mythology and symbolic imagery. Their attributes and iconographic elements are almost identical. Not only are *Khir Bhavani*'s emblems, gesture, and attributes given Tantric flavor but her most important iconographic elements, posture and seat, are synthesized in her cultic paraphernalia.

In her later images, however, *Khir Bhavani*'s *Tantric* throne is replaced by a lion seat. Moreover her posture also changes from *Vajraparyankasana*, the lotus posture to *Lalitasana*, the royal ease pose. Was there a religious or historic reason for this artistic change? Why was this iconographic transformation made in the images of goddess *Khir Bhavani?*

Early Images of *Maharajni Khir Bhavani*

Khir Bhavani has inspired visual representations in mediums such as water color, pen and ink, block printing and, more recently, posters. *Mahatmya* explains that by focusing on her image (*Murti*) devotees can achieve emancipation. Her images are to be visualized as pictorial scriptures and are intended to serve as a visual guides for inward contemplation. Her iconic images disclose spiritual realities of initiate's innermost self and the universe around him.

In *Khir Bhavani*'s earlier representations the goddess is shown as seated in the *Tantric* posture of *Vajraparyankasana* (her legs crossed, feet upturned and resting on opposite thighs)[9] on a lotus with thousand petals which in turn is placed on a hexagonal throne. In the latter paintings, however, she is represented elegantly seated on the back of a lion. In the depiction which accompanies the printed version of the *Mahatmya* (1981), she rides a lion (same as fig. 10). This is consistent with the other later depictions of the goddess (figs. 10 & 11). The style and technique of the early images dates them to the early twentieth century, simultaneously with the writing of the *Mahatmya*[10] (figs. 5, 6 & 7) and the later depictions (figs. 10, & 11) can be dated half a century later.

9 Although her feet are covered with heavy clothing yet her posture suggests that her legs must be crossed and feet upturned and placed on thighs as required in the Yogic posture.

10 The peripheral evidence indicates that the *Mahatmya* of the goddess could not have been written before the reign of Maharaja Pratap Singh (1885–1925).
The first printing press was established in 1901 in the valley. However, it was accessible to people only from 1918. *Purohits* continued to write the texts of horoscopes (*Zatuk*) and draw religious images (*Gora-Traí*) by hand until 1955. The originality of the images gradually declined. Recent *Zatuks* create goddess images from the block printing process. (In a letter to me by Prof. T.N.Ganjoo, University of Kashmir, dated May 20, 1988.)

One of *Khir Bhavani*'s most exquisite image in painted on paper in gouache during the first decade of the 20th Century (fig. 5)[11] In this painting the goddess is seated frontally in *Yogic* posture on a full-blossomed lotus placed on a hexagonal bench. Her head is set against the sun-rayed nimbus (*Prabhamandala*) under a decorative canopy. She wears a full-sleeved, full-length cadmium yellow gown against the deep red cushion. Her long black hair falls to her waist. She is decked with a jeweled crown (*Karandamukta*). She has three eyes (*Trinetra*). The third eye is drawn vertically in the middle of her forehead. Embellished with ornaments, she wears earrings, three necklaces, and bracelets. Flags (*Dhvaja*) and umbrellas (*Chhattra*)[12] offered by the votaries encircle her against the ultramarine sky. She has four arms. In her upper right hand she holds a lotus (*Padma*) and in the left she holds a spear (*Shula*). In her lower right hand she holds a poison or elixir container (*Sudha-patram*) and in her left hand an auspicious vessel (*Kalasham*). While the lotus and auspicious vessel symbolize her auspicious (*Sattvika*) nature as *Khir Bhavani*, the spear (in some pictures she holds a sword, *Khangam*) expresses her wrath (*Tamasi* nature) as *Shyama*, and the poison/elixir container, the paradoxical character of the Kashmiri goddess tradition in which her cult is rooted.

The goddess is flanked by the two high gods of mainstream Hinduism. On her right is the god *Vishnu* and on her left the god *Shiva*. Both gods are also seated on fully blossomed lotus seats. The presence of the two gods indicates her relationship with *Shiva*, who mandates her to take care of the valley. Her relationship with *Vishnu* is through *Rama* (*Vishnu*'s eighth incarnation) with whom she develops a strong connection in the *Mahatmya*. Her size, larger than the two major Hindu gods, further emphasizes her preeminence. The three deities face the seven-angled Tulmul spring (*Naga*) in which the goddess's temple is situated and her image enshrined.

The significance of the spring with its island temple is indicated by its size, which in this picture is depicted as large as the goddess herself. Facing the front of the temple is the prostrate figure of *Hanuman*, goddess's foremost devotee, paying his homage.

The goddess is seated upon a lotus. She carries one lotus in her hand. The spring is filled with the preeminent Kashmiri flower which denotes quintessential beauty. Paradoxically, the beauty of the lotus emerges from dirty waters and mire. It is a metaphor for the individual who resides in the world of pollution but is capable of emerging as pure as the lotus by self-effort

11 There is evidence of Kashmiri artists making paintings in traditional style during the early 20th century. See Ratan Parimoo's "Naran Murtzgar: The Maker of Images", in *The India Magazine*, Oct. 1985.

12 Kalhana mentions the gilt parasols which were to be erected over the temples. *Dhvaja* or the flag staff on the temple was a must 'without *dhvaja* demons come to reside in the temple.' The presence of *dhvaja* gratifies the divine beings. *Rajatarangini*. Ibid. VII. 528; VIII. 3364.

through *Yogic* meditation. Once an initiate is awakened to the thought of enlightenment, her way is opened towards the spiritual realm. Beauty and transcendence is at once woven into the iconic image of the goddess.

Khir Bhavani's central position, proportionately her larger size, her lotus posture (*Asana*) and the thousand petal lotus seat (also *Asana*) makes her a high deity. Her royal attire, crown and embellishments make her not only divine but also an aristocrat. Through visual imagery the local artist has created a vision of a newly emerged deity as supreme. With what authority has the Kashmiri artist depicted a regional and newly emerged deity as a supreme goddess?

Khir Bhavani conceptually belongs to the Kashmiri Shaiva traditions in which she alone reigns. She is not subordinate to any god. In her *Mahatmya*, she is described as supreme as goddess *Tripurasundari*. *Bhairava* gives *Maharajni* the mandate of protecting the valley and himself retires to the Himalayan mountains. She is not his consort, but personified pure power. She was of *Tamasi* and *Rajasi* nature but transformed herself into *Sattvas* goddess. As the presiding *Kula Devi* of Kashmiri Hindu households she has sublimated her violent *Tamasi* and passionate *Rajasi* nature and now dwells in a state of constant spiritual bliss.

Transitional Images Of *Maharajni Khir Bhavani*

The pen and ink drawing of the goddess powerfully depicts her textual image (fig. 6). Created in the late nineteenth century, in this drawing the name *Rama* in *Devanagari* script is literally ingrained into *Maharajni Khir Bhavani*'s image. The goddess is seated on a full-blossomed lotus-seat (*Padma-Asana*), placed on a hexagonal bench. At the bottom left of the drawing is depicted her lion/tiger vehicle (*Simha-Asana*), and the bottom right is shown her island temple in the sacred spring. Her head is set against the sun-rayed nimbus (*Prabhamandala*) and is decked with a jeweled crown (*Karandamukta*). She has three eyes (*Trinetra*). The third eye drawn vertically is depicted in the middle of her forehead. Embellished with ornaments, she wears earrings, three necklaces (one necklace is replaced by a serpent, *Naga*), and bracelets. She has four arms. In her upper two hands she holds a lotus (*Padma*), and an auspicious vessel (*Kalasham*). In her lower pair of hands she holds a sword (*Khangam*) and elixir-container (*Sudha-Patram*). While lotus is a symbol of eternal generation and regeneration, the vessel carries the auspicious water. The sword is the symbol of initiates determination to exterminate or transcend physical in order to experience the spiritual. The sword cuts through the ignorance. Elixir is the spiritual bliss of *Sattvika* attribute with which goddess blesses her devotees.

This drawing must have been made at the command of the scribes who wrote the *Mahatmya*. This iconic pen drawing was not created by lines but by using name '*Rama*' numberless times. The god *Rama* was thus literally ingrained in the mythology of the goddess through her image.

Astrological charts (horoscope or *Zatuk* in Kashmiri) were created for all Kashmiri *Pandit* family members. A chart, made in scroll format, always began with a hand drawn picture but more recently with a block print image of the family deity (*Kula Devi*). The picture included such goddesses as *Khir Bhavani, Jwala, Sharika, Bhadrakali* and others. *Khir Bhavani* is probably the *Kula Devi* of the majority of the Kashmiri *Brahmins.*[13]

In technical skill and technique these representations are not as refined and elegant as the miniature painting images, nevertheless their iconographic details are correctly delineated. In one such image of *Maharajni Khir Bhavani* (fig. 7) she is depicted seated under a canopy. She is fully clothed and wearing her crown, with three eyes and a serpent necklace. She holds her four emblems in her hands with the sword kept behind her back to undermine the significance of the destructive weapon. Her posture and seat continue to remain that of *Vajraparyankasana*—a fully blossomed lotus placed on the hexagonal seat. Her lion/tiger vehicle (*Vahana*) is seated under her throne, peacefully.

Later Images of *Khir Bhavani* and the Goddess *Durga/Kali*

By the last quarter of the nineteenth century the iconic image of the goddess *Khir Bhavani* was fully established. However, within a decade an important iconographic detail was selectively replaced. In her late nineteenth century images, *Khir Bhavani*'s *Yogic Vajraparyankasana* posture is replaced by *Lalitasana*, the royal ease posture. This pose is the same as the posture of the goddess *Durga* in the late nineteenth century Bengali art.

Calcutta was established as the capital of British India in 1773 and remained the hub of political and religious life until 1912 when the capital was moved to more centrally located capital, Delhi.

From the last quarter of the eighteenth centurey and the first decade of the twentieth a new middle class emerged and flourished in Calcutta. Many major religious, social and political reforms sprouted and developed in this cosmopolitan city. With the British imperial government set in Calcutta (Bengal) during winter there was a considerable exchange of religious and political ideas between the regions of Calcutta and Kashmir, the favorite summer time resort. Officials, doctors, religious teachers exchanged and influenced many religious and political ideas. Evidently the Hindu reformist from Bengal, Swami Vivekananda visited Kashmir in 1887 where he spent a week at the pilgrimage center of Tulmul.[14]

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13 Samsar Chand Koul, in his pamphlet *Khir Bhavani Spring*, Utpal Publications, Srinagar, 1954, writes that every Kashmiri Hindu has his own *Kula Devi*, guardian goddess. When a child is born or when a son is married, he is taken to his guardian goddess for thanks offering. p.35.

14 R.C. Majumdar: 1965, pp.276 and Nikhilananda: 1953, pp.340.

By the 1900 a passionate nationalism with religious overtones began to grow in the minds of a new and widely growing group of young middle class Hindus. The founders of Hindu religious reform parties were all born in west Bengal.[15]

The set of courses at the newly established University of Calcutta followed the University of London curriculum. By 1890's hundreds of students graduated. Unable to find employment they united their skills and labor by producing flamboyant lithographs depicting mythological scenes and Hindu gods and goddesses. The lithographs were mass produced as such posters were in much demand. Some of the posters depicting goddess *Durga* seated on her lion vehicle must have reached the Valley of Kashmir.

In Bengal the Mother aspect of the goddess *Durga* is the most significant attribute of the goddess. She is also powerful and victorious. She protects, gives knowledge and ushers in peace through her rule. She is also *Shakti*, the creative power.[16] Bengali *Durga* is depicted as the one who...

> ...wears an elaborate head-dress and holds royal insignia in her hands. She is covered with costly jewelry: earrings, wrists and arm bracelets, nose-rings, ankle bracelets, necklace and hair braided in tassels. She has the third eye in the middle of her brow...She stands on a lion.[17]

In the *Durga stotra*, an appendix to the epic *Mahabharata* the description of the goddess *Kali*, the terrible manifestation of *Durga*, reverberates much of the new iconographic image of *Khir Bhavani* as Shyama.

> Mounted on a lion,
> The black one is like newly risen-sun,
> Pure, chaste, carrying vessel, noose, bow,
> with garment of snake-hood. Oh great *Kali*, fond of liquor, flesh,
> You are fortune, success, knowledge, mind
> you perish delusion, death, sickness, fear.[18]

The similarity of attributes and characteristics of *Durga/Kali* with *Shyama Khir Bhavani* are striking. The goddess *Khir Bhavani* as *Shyama* is also *Kali*. She drinks liquor and eats flesh. As *Khir Bhavani* she is chaste (virgin), pure (vegetarian) and carries a vessel filled with elixir. She brings in fortune, success and knowledge and causes death, sickness and fear to perish. She is also associated with snakes.

15 The prominent among them were Ram Mohan Roy who started *Brahmo Samaj* (1820's), Ramakrishna Paramahamsa and his disciple Swami Vivekananda who founded *Ramakrishna Mission*. Shri Aurobindo, born in 1872, was another religious reformer.

16 See Akos Ostor's *The Play of the Gods*, University of Chicago Press, 1980.

17 Ibid. pp.38.

18 Coburn Thomas, B. *Devi Mahatmya: The Crystallization of the Goddess Tradition*, Motilal Banarasidass, New Delhi, 1988.

In her *Mahatmya* goddess *Khir Bhavani* is acknowledged as the protectress against natural calamities such as sickness, disease and death and she is the harbinger of prosperity and happiness[19] as is the goddess *Durga*. Their attributes, characteristics, and iconic details indicate that their striking similarities in textual and pictorial descriptions must have encouraged Kashmiri artists to incorporate a more meaningful seat, or in this case vehicle for the new goddess for the reasons discussed below. Printed posters of Bengali *Durga* riding her lion *vahana* must have reached Srinagar and influenced the traditional image of *Khir Bhavani*.

At the turn of the century the Kashmiri Hindus had simultaneously become aware of their own traditions and had at the same time become westernized. They were as yet unsure of their heritage as they were superficially acquainted with it. Educated by British in modern science and western culture they found the Hindu symbols graceless or at least meaningless. The toll of converts to Christianity was not as large as was expected by the missionaries but the effect on the mind and hearts of Indians was very great.[20]

Khir Bhavani's images delineated her as the auspicious and grant bestowing deity. Replacing her *Tantric* posture and seat with that of the lion vehicle not only revised the image according to the changing times but also enhanced her iconic representation. The new image conveyed the idea of her mobility instead of a static throne, recently developed pride and newly achieved confidence. Not only the spiritual ascent but physical movement has become a component of Kashmiri Pandits' lives. Although sedentary by nature, their political history has forced them to move all around the world. The inclination of movement also reflects in the myth. 'Immovable decided to move' (*Sl*. 31, First Rendering) And her movement saved her from remaining *Tamas*.

Contemporary Images of Khir Bhavani

Maharajni Khir Bhavani is depicted in the modern attire of a Hindu woman with *Saree* and blouse inside the text of printed *Mahatmya* and on the cover of a contemporary horoscope (fig. 10). She sits stylishly on the back of a lion on a decorative covering. Her head, embellished with a crown, is set against the three-circled halo. Of her three terrible attributes, only the sword is represented. The serpent necklace has been replaced by a flower garland and a *Bindi* in the shape of the third eye adorns the middle of her forehead. She has four arms and holds in her hands the attributes which typify her. The major difference in this picture is her posture (*Asana*) and her seat, or in this case her lion vehicle (*Simhavahana*). While her right leg is placed on her left thigh, the left leg hangs to one side. The similarity of her attributes to those of the Bengali goddess *Durga* is imposing.[21]

19 The *Mahatmya*. *Shloka* 54–58, Ist Ren.

20 Ibid. Spear, 1969. p.163.

21 Ibid. Ostor. 1980, p.38.

In a comparatively recent popular lithograph (fig. 11) *Maharajni Khir Bhavani*'s representation is dramatized which depicts her against a turbulent sky ablaze with light. The perspective of her frontal image defies the traditional way of depicting the goddess. Although the emblems in her four hands and her long black hair remain constant, her jewelry is subdued and her third eye is replaced with a red dot (*Bindi*). The calm lion has been replaced by the ferocious Bengal tiger who exudes vigor and power. His foreshortened body gives this image a menacing feeling. The goddess and the vehicle look more formidable than the earlier images of the goddess with her tiger or lion *vahana*.

The earlier posture and seat of the goddess *Khir Bhavani* were inspired by the images of *Tripurasundari*, their meaning, however, was forgotten. The lotus/hexagonal seat seemed like a mere ornamental throne in the new cultural context of Kashmir. The lion vehicle, after all, symbolized mobility, might and natural confidence. Thus it seemed a meaningful replacement for the esoteric lotus/hexagonal throne. The replacement made sense to Kashmiri artists and the modification took place. The rest of the image was left intact. The lion was an appropriate symbol of the time. It represented pride, strength, and self-confidence.

My painting, *Reminiscing Khir Bhavani* (cover and fig. 15) was inspired by a similar drawing on the cover of the translation of the *Mahatmya* (1981). In my painting I focus on the water and serpant manifestations of the goddess in the abstracted shape of the Tulmul spring. In the background, the lower half suggests the mountains and forests of the enchanting valley and the upper half indicates vegetation of the marshes. At the lower right hand corner, a reclining chair symbolizes, absent observer. Only memories have remained. This is a contemporary vision of Maji Khir Bhavani's island temple.

The textual (*Mahatmya*) and visual evidence (Images) from the cultic paraphernalia of the Kashmiri goddess *Khir Bhavani* slowly unfolds a complex phenomenon that of the birth of a goddess in the cultural context of Kashmir. Their study reflects an involved cultural process which is simultaneously spontaneous and deliberate. The study of her *Yantra* (mystical diagram), *Mantra* (mystical syllables) and her Island temple at Tulmul, to which we turn next, further unravels this cultural process.

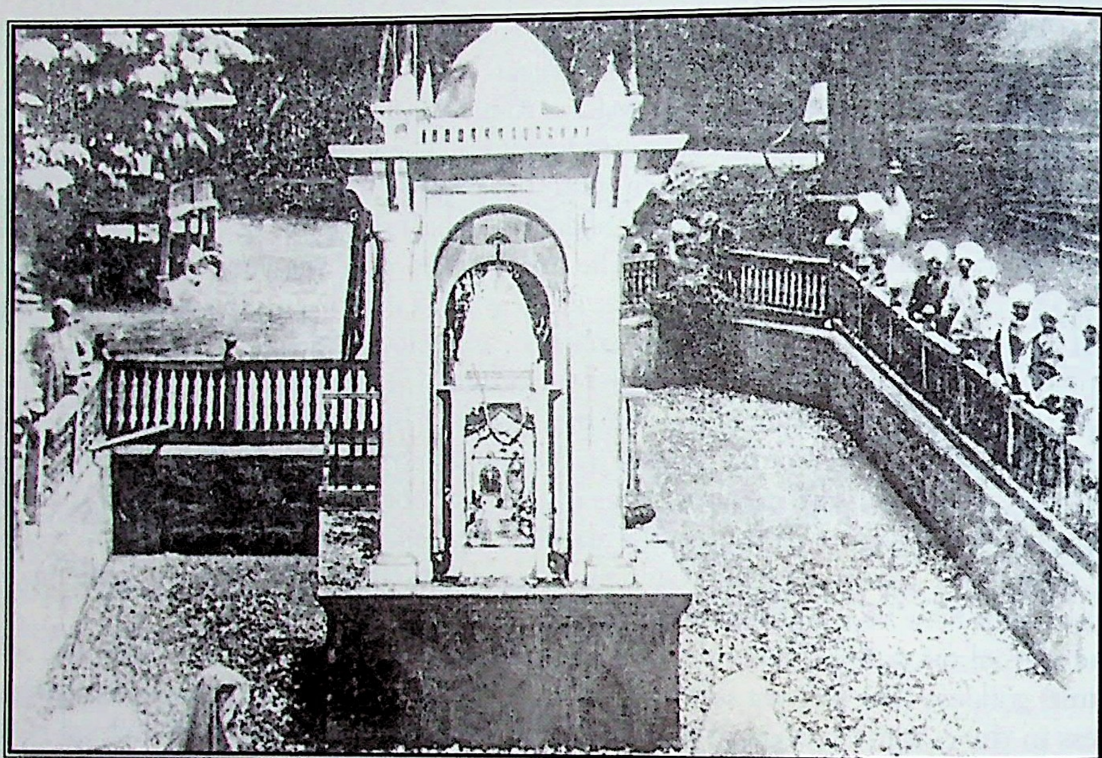


Fig: 1

Temple of *Maharajni Khir Bhavani*,

Tulmul, Kashmir Valley, India, 1950

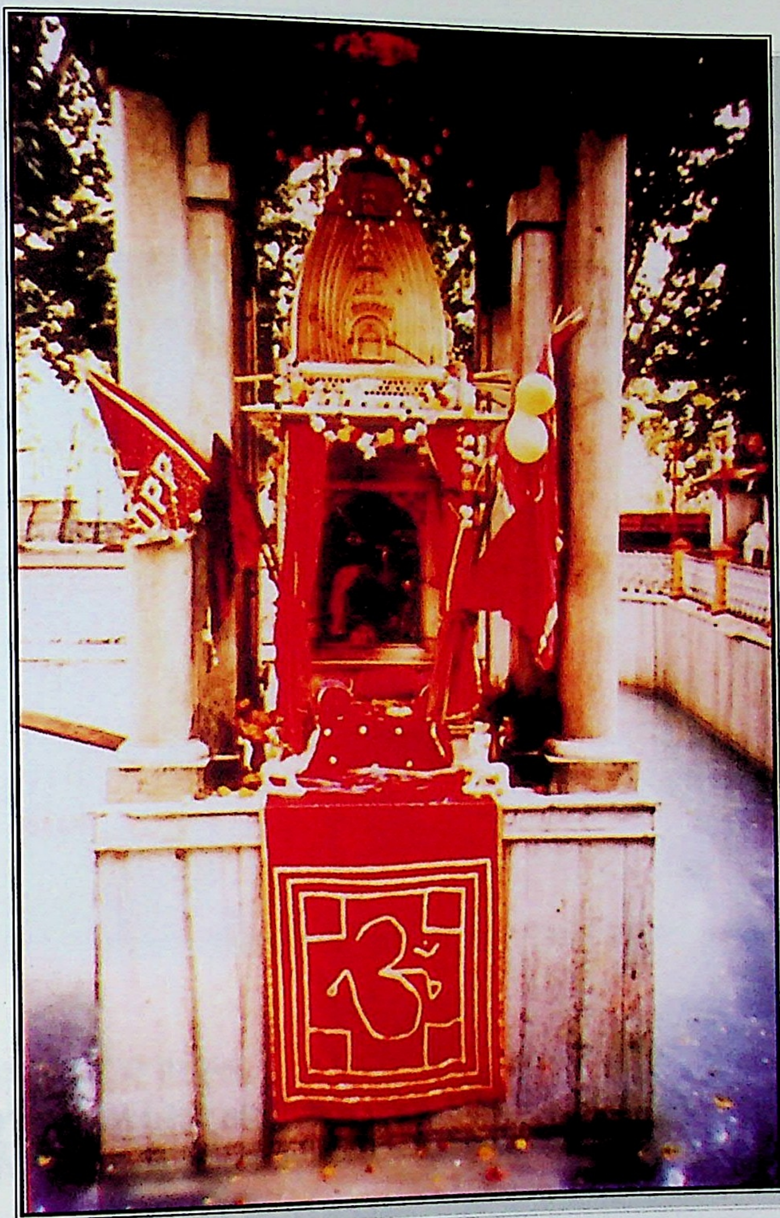


Fig : 2A

Temple of *Khir Bhavani*,

Tulmul, Kashmir Valley, India, 1990

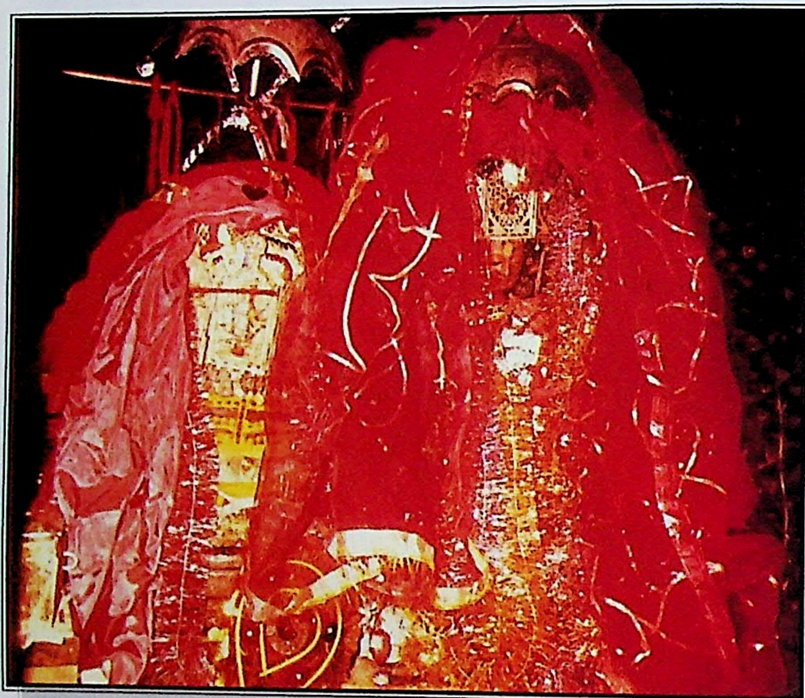
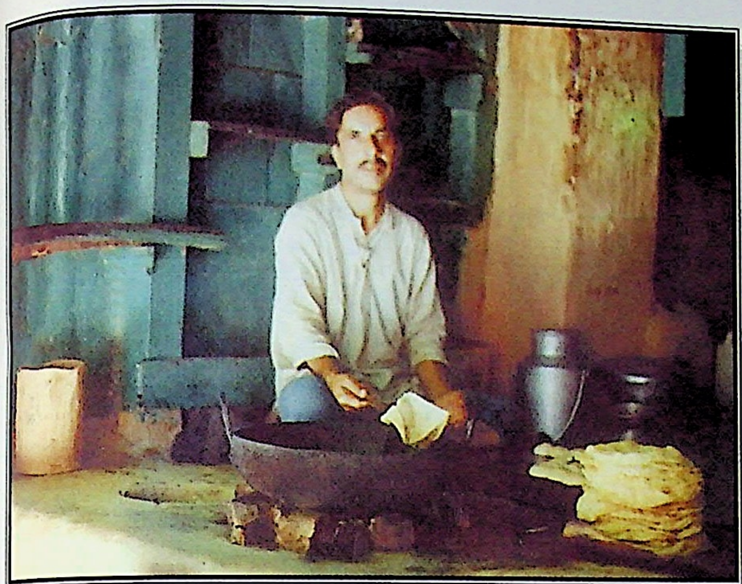


Fig : 2b

Image of Khir Bhavani and the Linga in the womb-chamber of the temple covered with red scarves & gold tinsel, 1990,

Tulmul, Kashmir Valley, India



***Lucci* and *Halwa* shop in the *Khir Bhavani* Temple Compound, 1985**

Fig : 3

Devotees Performing *Khir Bhavani's* Daily Ritual, 1985

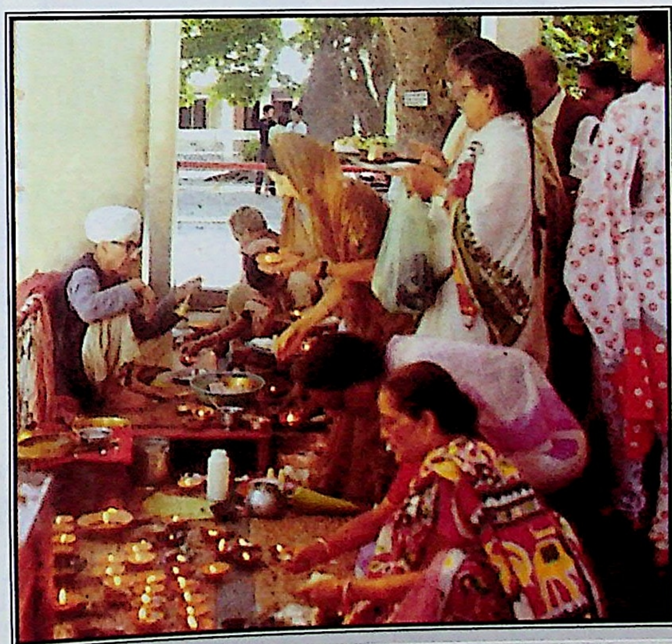


Fig : 4



Fig : 5

Khir Bhavani and Her Spring, Kashmir Style
Gouache on Paper

First Decade of the 20th Century C.E.,
University of Kashmir Library Collection,
Kashmir, India.



Fig : 6

Khir Bhavani, Kashmir Style, Pen and Ink Drawing,

Early 20th Century C.E., *University of Kashmir Library Collection*
Kashmir, India



Fig : 7

Khir Bhavani, Block print image from a Horoscope (Zatuk),

c. Mid 20th Century C.E., Author's Collection



Fig : 8

Tripurasundari (*Bhairavi Aghoresvari*), Kashmir Style,

Gouache and gold on paper

C. Mid 19th Century C.E., *Author's collection*



Fig : 9

Tripurasundari (Bhairavi Aghoresvari),

Kashmir Style Gouache on paper, c. 19th Century C.E.,
University of Kashmir Library Collection, Kashmir, India



Fig : 10

Khir Bhavani, Cover of a Horoscope

Author's Collection. Contemporary.



Fig : 11

Khir Bhavani, Contemporary Lithograph

Author's Collection

Fig: 12

Yantra of *Khir Bhavani*, Pen and Ink Drawing

Published in the Mahatmya, 1981

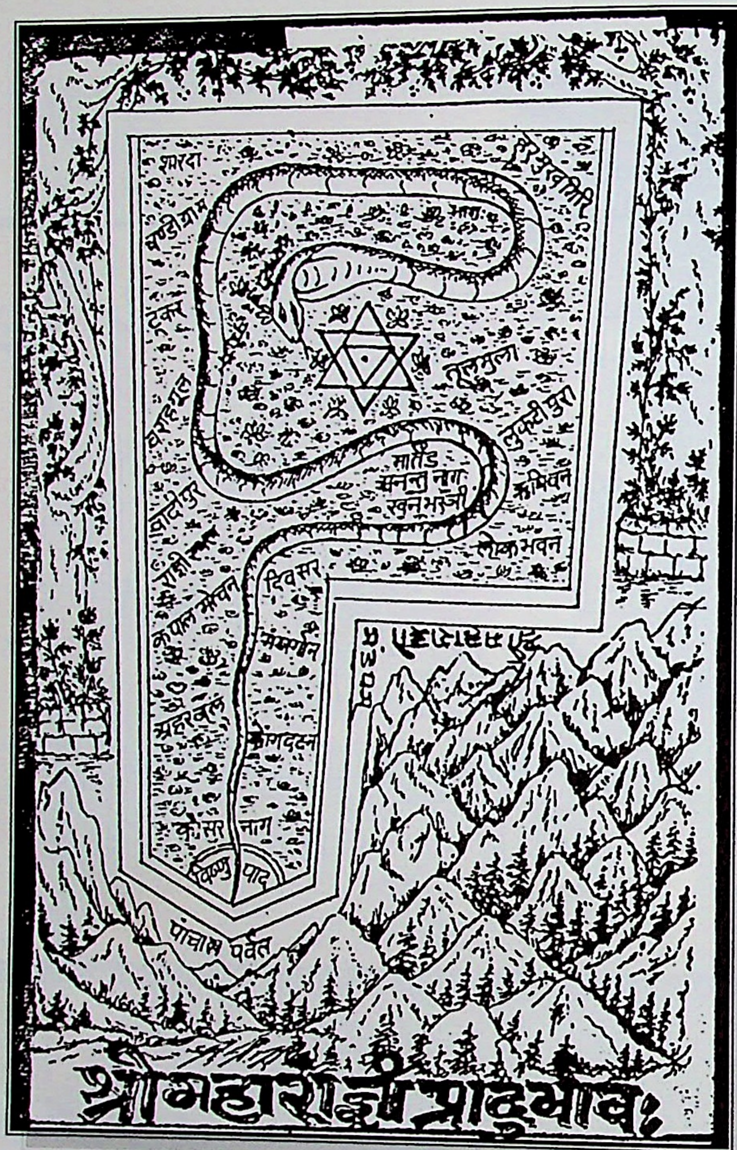


Fig: 13

The Serpent Menifestation of *Khir Bhavani* in the Spring with names of all the places the goddess visited before settling down at the Island temple. Her temple is indicated by a hexagon in the middle of the Tulmul Nag. Pen and Ink Drawing.

Mahatmya Cover, 1981

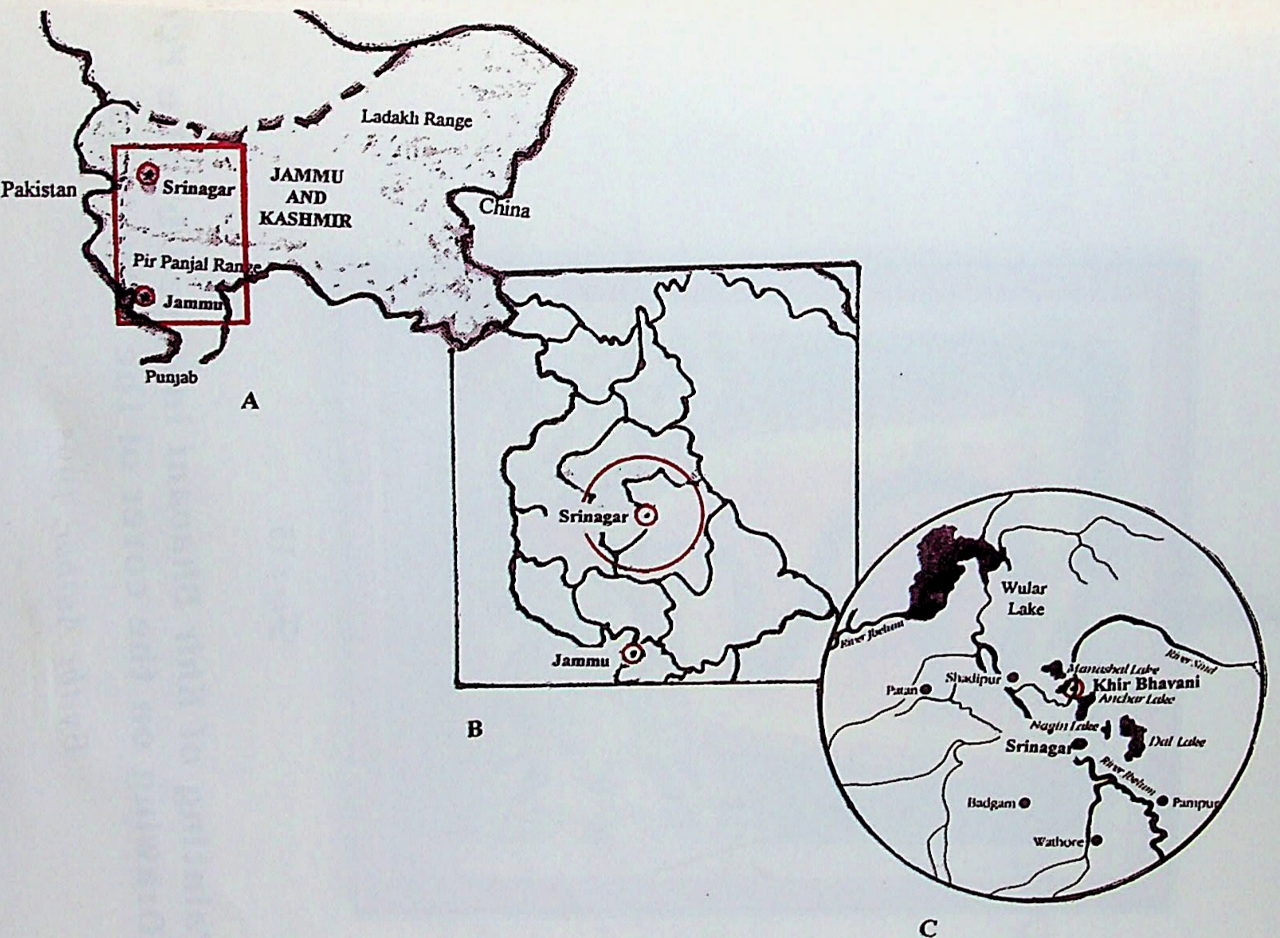


Fig : 14

A: The State of Jammu and Kashmir with an Inset of Srinagar and its vicinity.
B: Srinagar and its vicinity with an Inset of Area around Tulmul
C: Location of the temple of Khir Bhavani at Tulmul Village.



Fig : 15

A Recent Painting of *Khir Bhavani* inspired by the Pen & Ink Drawing on the cover of the Mahatmya.

By the Author, 1995

chapter

4

THE CULTIC PARAPHERNALIA

Yantra, Mantra and Naga

Personality of the goddess *Khir Bhavani* gradually unfolds itself subsequent to a careful and critical reading of *Mahatmya Shri Shri Maharajni Pradurbhava* and viewing her iconic images. At the initial level of understanding, the textual and visual material reveals that the goddess *Khir Bhavani* is a complex goddess incorporating *Shaiva*, *Rama* (*Vaishnava*) and indigenous *Naga* traditions. At a deeper level of understanding her *Tantric/Shakta*[1] associations are disclosed.

The evidence that the goddess is grounded in Kashmiri *Shaiva Tantrism* becomes conclusive when we delve still deeper in her *Tantric* attributes of *Yantra* (geometric diagram), *Mantra* (mystical syllables) and *Naga* (the latent power of the goddess residing in the island temple). Geometric diagrams, mystical syllables and latent serpent power are integral to *Tantric* tradition.[2]

In her scholarly work on *Tantrism* Madhu Khanna writes, 'The infinite diversity of the universe as represented by the (Tantric) Hindu deities is manifest most explicitly in the *Murti*, more abstractly as the *Yantra* and most subtly by the *Mantra*.'[3] This idea is expressed in the Homage to the goddess *Maharajni*. The Great God *Shiva Bhairava* reveals goddess's *Mantra*, *Yantra* and *Murti* to his wife *Bhairavi*. He gives her 'the whole secret of the divinity's truth, which is difficult even for the gods to get' and requests her to protect it. The 'whole secret' is in the *Mantroddharah*. (*Sl.* 12 & 13, Homage).

1 Miranda Shaw in her book, *Passionate Enlightenment; Women in Tantric Buddhism*, Princeton University Press, 1994 quotes Andre Padoux, a world-renowned authority on Hindu Tantra saying, as a whole, Shakta ideology is ...fundamentally inherent to Tantrism". pp. 32–33.

2 See Ajit Mookerjee's *Kundalini: The Arousal of the Inner Energy*, Clarion Books, Delhi. 1982.

3 Madhu Khanna, *Yantra: The Tantric Symbol of Cosmic Unity*, Thames and Hudson, London. 1979. p.34.

The Hindi and English translators of the Sanskrit *Mahatmya* avoid translating *Mantroddharah*. The Hindi translator Prem Nath Handu has translated the sacred text in its entirety except verses fourteen to seventeen. In the footnote to the verse fourteen, he writes, that each word of the Abstract of the *Mantra* is loaded with meaning. Its translation is not possible and it is difficult for ordinary people to understand. He then abruptly goes on to explain the ritual which accompanies the *Mantra*. The English translator, Kashi Nath Dhar avoids this dilemma by not translating the Homage at all. The reason that the writers of the sacred Sanskrit text were cryptic about their writings and the translators secretive about it was because of the power of the erotic rituals. The *Maharajni* sect has only remnants of such *Tantric/Shakta* traditions. Fundamental *Tantric* paraphernalia is nevertheless linked to her worship including her *Yantra*, *Mantra* and *Naga*. Finally, she is not only linked with the *Tantric* goddess *Bhairavi Aghoreshwari* but is herself referred to as *Tripurasundari*.

Khir Bhavani's Yantra

All *Tantric* deities have a geometric diagram, known as *Yantra*, for the meditational purposes. *Yantra*, drawn on a palm leaf, engraved on a metal sheet, or drawn on paper is regarded as a substitute for the anthropomorphic image of the deity. The *Yantra* circumscribes a deity's sacred power. All deity's iconic characteristics and attributes are believed to embody in this geometric form. The *Yantra* contains deity's 'vitality and the life force' in abstract. As Madhu Khanna points out this life force is equivalent to the power of the symbolic imagery in her iconic image.

The *Yantra* (fig. 12) of the goddess *Maharajni Khir Bhavani* accompanies the text of the Hindi and English translation of the *Mahatmya* (Sl. 22-32, Homage). Contemplation of goddess's *Yantra* and recitation of her *Mantra* are essential for her worship (*Tantric Sadhana*). The text goes on to say, 'The enjoyer who becomes one with the goddess attains. release. Whoever recites her *Mantra*, which has all the secrets, and worships her *Yantra*, he should be satisfied that he will become *Shiva-Bhairava*.' (Sl. 59, First Rendering)

In *Khir Bhavani*'s *Yantra* the three fundamental shapes of geometry viz.: a point (*Bindu*), triangle (*Trikona*) and circle (*Chakra*) appear in intricate combination and permutations. The shapes and lines of her *Yantra* are related in such a way that a linear field of energy is created. The current of this energy is believed to reach from the subtle form of the goddess located in the central point (*Bindu*) of the *Yantra* to the contemplating initiate (*Tantric Sadhaka*). The initiate envisions the deity through concentration and control of mind and body.

> Tantric *Yogi* after vigorous training in self discipline, in controlling his physical and mental pro-cesses, is able to suppress the chaotic world of the sub-conscious. After integrating himself spiritually and emotionally and with penetrating concentration he evokes the deity by means of *Dhyana* (trance) and recitation of *Mantra*

(mystical syllable). By means of *Dhyana* and *Mantra* he envisions a blue-print for the execution of deity's *Yantra* which also reveals to him the macrocosm as it exists within himself. Awakening one's inner center implies gathering one's self into a single creative point, the spiritual center of the *Yogi*.[4]

Khir Bhavani originates from the point (*Bindu*) of the *Yantra*, symbolizing her subtle form. She is the point of origin of the supreme consciousness—the radiating source of energy. The subtle point is surrounded by an inner triangle, the simple expression of cosmic location after the point. Each arm of the triangle represent her various forms: *Bala* her *Tamasi* form, *Lakshmi* her *Rajasi* form and *Saraswati* her *Sattvika* form. In her *Mahatmya* she is referred to as *Tripurasundari*, the goddess who possesses all the three qualities. The inner triangle is surrounded by a star formed by two intersecting triangles. One pointing upwards symbolizes the male principle and the one pointing downwards the female principle of the cosmos, representing the unity of *Shiva* and *Shakti*. The hexagonal space formed by the two intersecting triangles becomes the seat of the supreme goddess. This hexagon is guarded by the six Kashmiri protective deities: *Durga, Tripura, Kalika, Shive, Vaishnavi* and *Sharika*.

The star is enclosed by a circle which represents the cyclical forces, the contraction and expansion of the cosmic rhythm. The circle blossoms into the eight lotus petals. The blossom of the lotus is one of the principal archetypal symbols used in *Yantras*. Its geometrically abstract petals point outwards which illustrates the unfolding of power of the divine essence.

Beyond the realm of the divine are represented the three circles indicating the three leveled cosmos: celestial, atmospheric and terrestrial—the macrocosm. It indicates the *Tantric* unity between macrocosms and the meditating *Sadhaka*'s body as the microcosm. Every step in the ritual creates a relationship between the inner and the outer worlds. Each progressive geometric forms of the *Yantra* resonates between the deep-seated goddess and her cosmic emanations. The outermost shape of the *Yantra* is a square. It forms the base of the manifested world and denotes the terrestrial world. At the periphery of this square are four portals known as four cosmic doors because through them the *Sadhaka* symbolically enters the cosmic force fields. These portals are the lowest point of ascent towards perfection.

The *Tantric* practitioner starts his spiritual journey by mentally entering through these portals until he is able to reach the central dot in order to meet with the presiding deity in her subtle form. *Sadhaka* who meditates on this diagram believes it to be an infinite reservoir of collective energy from where everything issues and everything returns.

Outer worship gives way to an inner form of contemplation which leads the initiate through stages of spiritual unfolding proceeding from the gross (*Sthula*) to the subtle (*Sukshama*) levels of consciousness. 'The internalization of the symbols as they become subtler is supported by the dynamics of the *Yantra* until a culmination is reached when man,

4 Khanna, 1979. p.10.

symbols and cosmos are united thus giving way to the supreme bliss which is defined as 'Resting in the Self'.[5]

The body of *Sadhaka* with its physical and psychological planes is considered to be one of the most powerful instruments of spiritual transformation. It is the physical substratum of divine latent energy. Only by awakening the divine energy within can an individual experience the hidden divinity. The point (*Bindu*) is represented by the latent power located at the end of the spinal chord, the south of the body in the form of a coiled serpent (*Kundalini*). The Seed (*Bija*) or *Shiva* is located in the cranium, at the top of the head, the north of the body. The goal of divine bliss is reached when *Bindu* joins the cosmic Consciousness, *Shiva*.

Tantrics believe that it is possible for each individual to activate the latent subtle energy through appropriate physical and mental discipline. In the case of the bodily geometric diagrams, the portals are at the end of the spinal chord and so is the latent energy. When *Bija* and *Bindu* meet spiritual joy is experienced.

Khir Bhavani's Mantra[6]

Kashmiri Pandits, whose tutelary or guardian deity is *Khir Bhavani* murmur (*Japa*) her mystical syllables (*Mantras*) at her temple. Two *Mantras* are dedicated to the goddess, one to her terrible and the other to her auspicious manifestation. As *Tamasi Shyama/Kali* her *Mantra* is composed of twenty two Sanskrit syllables and as *Sattvika Maharajni* her *Mantra* has fifteen syllables.

It is, however, her auspicious fifteen syllable *Mantra* which is given the utmost significance. The great god and supreme *Yogi Shiva-Bhairava*, who is *Maharajni Khir Bhavani*'s formost devotee, continuously murmurs her fifteen syllable *Mantra:*

Aum Hrim Shrim Ram Klim Sau
1 2 3 4 5 6
Bhagavatyai Rajnyai Hrim Svaha
7 8 9 10 11 12 13 14 15

What do these seemingly nonsensical and unintelligible combination of Sanskrit syllables called *Mantra* mean? How does a *Mantra* become imbued with sacred power? Why is the continuous murmur (*Japa*) of *Mantra* by devotees considered a powerful spiritual tool?

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5 Khanna, Ibid. pp. 107.

6 In *Mantrayana*, a sub sect of *Tantrism*, sound is considered as important as the form. It is believed that geometric form in its essence is sound condensed as matter. What the *Yantra* of a deity is to its form, its *Mantra* is to its sound.

"*Mantras* are...considered, not products of discursive thought, human wisdom or poetic fantasy but flashlights of the eternal truth, seen by those eminent men who have come into super sensuous contact with the unseen."[7] According to *Mantra Shastra*[8] Sanskrit alphabet (*Varanmala*) has divine origin and is therefore sacred. Each individual letter (*Akshara*), consonants as well as vowels are endowed with divine power. Vowels are male and the consonants are female aspect of the alphabet. 'Without the vowels the manifestation of other letters of the alphabet do not arise.'[9] They are believed to exist as a subtle (*Sukshama*) universe in themselves.

The faith in the efficacy of the sacred utterance reverberates as the most essential trait of the *Trika* school of *Kashmir Shaivism*. In this school the phonetic plane of existence is considered parallel to and even basic to the objective world. The ultimate phonetic power (*Matrika Shakti*) is equated with the ultimate reality (*Param Shiva*).

The sound of the Sanskrit letters (*Akshara*) is given as much primacy and eternality as the form of the letters themselves. In the Trika school of Kashmiri Shaivism writes Madhu Khanna:

> The phenomenon of the pronounced sound as mantra is linked with the highest metaphysical principle—the primordial energy (*Matrika Shakti*). She is believed to be latent in the letters of the *mantras*...Ultimately all letters are seen as the reflection of the universal energy divinized in the concept of *Matrika Shakti*. It is perhaps for this reason that the letters of the Sanskrit called *matrikas* are also known as *akshara* or imperishable because they share the immutable and eternal quality of their source.[10]

On the phonic plane of divine existence the first letter of the Sanskrit alphabet, the letter 'A' represents *Shiva* and the last letter 'Ha' represents *Shakti*. The combination of the two letters 'A' and 'Ha' embraces the entire range of the Sanskrit alphabet and epitomizes the whole of creation in its subtle aspect as sound.

The energy which emanates from *Shiva-Shakti* is an extremely subtle state of pure phonic energy and is called *Nada*. The latent energy of *Nada* is on the macrocosmic level what *Bindu* (also known as *Kundalini Shakti*) is on the microcosmic level. In other words, like the latent power of the *Bindu*, the spark of the ultimate phonetic energy lies dormant within all individual devotees. *Bindu* and *Nada* together create incomprehensible silent sound on the macrocosmic level which on the microcosmic level create subtle speech (*Mantra*) and gross speech, the discursive language.[11]

7 Jan Gonda, "The Indian Mantra", *Oriens*, 1963, Vol.16, p.247.

8 Tantric texts on the teachings of mystical syllables.

9 Khanna, 1979, p. 43

10 Ibid. pp.34–36.

11 Sanjukta Gupta *et al.*, *Hindu Tantrism*, E. J. Brill. 1979, p.15.

A single *Mantra* is composed of a combination of monosyllabic Sanskrit letters such as *Krim, Hrim, Shrim, Aum* which are called *bija* mantras. More complex *Mantras* are composed of a sequence of such syllables. The *Mantras* are used to evoke divine powers and to realize a communion of man with the divine essence of the universe. In order for man to access deity through the utterance of *Mantra*.[12]

A devotee cannot create a *Mantra*. "A *mantra* shows itself through some process of super sensory perception, as a result of successful mediation...it is revealed in a flash as a compete unit. Its fruition is either the result of *Japa*, and act of grace or is drug induced...Once the unique *Mantra* is obtained it is memorized and always used with the specialized ritual.[13]

Khir Bhavani's fifteen worded *Mantra* is extensively used during her ritual and worship. It is the symbolic utterance unique to her and is unintelligible to the non-initiate. Its purpose is to propitiate the goddess and acquire some kind of power or wish.

In the *Mahatmya Shri Shri Maharajnya Pradurbhava* the merits of listening and reciting the *Mantra* of the goddess are highly recommended. It is claimed, 'whoever recites her *Mantra* which has all the secrets, he should be satisfied that he will become *Shiva Bhairava* (*Sl*. 59, First Rendering); whoever worships the mother of the world with *Mantras* produced by voice, his speech will flow like the flow of the river Ganges about that there is not doubt (*Sl*. 60, First Rendering); whoever hears the *Mantra* will obtain every delight and by mere listening (of the *Mantra*) all successes are obtained (*Sl*. 2, Second Rendering). The purpose of listening and reciting the *Mantra* of the goddess throughout the *Mahatmya* is so that the devotee gradually leads back to the ultimate reality. 'The *Mantras* are not to be viewed in conceptual terms...They are non discursive concentrated symbols which at recitation arouse appropriate psychic state in the *Sadhaka*.'[14]

The *Khir Bhavani*'s *Mahatmya* claims that the auspicious *Mantra* reveals what is mysterious and beyond normal comprehension. Through this *Mantra* the *Sadhaka* can spiritually penetrate into ineffable depths of contemplation and experience the goddess and ultimately the supreme Consciousness. Although the text eulogizes the fifteen syllable of the *Mantra* of the goddess for her auspicious form as *Maharajni Khir Bhavani*, it is silent about her twenty two worded *Mantra* for her terrible form as *Kali*. The latter *Mantra* is:

Krim Krim Krim Hrim
1 2 3 4
Hrim Hrim Hrim Dakshine Kalike
5 6 7 8 9 10 11 12 13

12 Khanna, 1979, p.37.

13 Aghehananda Bharati, *The Tantric Tradition*, Rider & Company, London. 1965.p.117.

14 Ibid.

Hrim *Hrim* *Hrim* *Hrim*
14 15 16 17
Krim *Krim* *Krim* *Svaha*
18 19 20 21 22

The significance of a *Mantra* is realized when it is recited according to sacred rules and accompanied with an appropriate ritual. A meticulously detailed ritual is describe in the *Mahatmya* of *Khir Bhavani*. The ritual is performed by the goddess *Bhairavi* under the divine supervision of her husband, *Bhairava*.

The ritual begins from the eighteenth stanza of the third section, 'Homage to the goddess'. The goddess *Bhairavi* seats herself on a sacred mat in a *Yogic* posture. While reciting on *Khir Bhavani*'s fifteen worded *Mantra*, she faces towards her *Yantra*. *Bhairavi* then performs the ritual of cleansing her body. While muttering monosyllables of *Khir Bhavani*'s auspicious *Mantra* (*Ram, Rim, Rum, Raim, Raum* and so on), she sprinkles water and simultaneously touches each of her ten fingers one by one, heart, head, hair, ears, eyes, and other parts of her body. Her husband guides her to recite the *Khir Bhavani Mantra* based on the famous *Gayatri Mantra*, three times.

In order to intensify her concentration *Bhairavi* is asked to look at the iconic image of *Khir Bhavani* (fig. 10) and recite aloud the following eulogy (which is also the second stanza of *Khir Bhavani*'s Hymn):

Elevated, shining like thousand suns, having three eyes,
Seated on the lion throne, surrounded by snakes,
Holding a cup, carrying sword and lotus,
with an elixir container in her hands,
I worship Rajni, her face blossoming like lotus.

Murmuring the *Mantra*, looking at the iconic image and turning a rosary of 108 beads, *Bhairavi*'s mind is completely engrossed in the divinity of *Khir Bhavani*. The ritual is thus completed.

This ritual is the blue print for all worshipers to follow. It forces the worshiper to become one with the goddess, become peaceful and achieve object of her devotion. Through *Mantra Japa* unique vibrations are released which invite the presence of the goddess in her subtle sound form. The worshiper gradually unfolds the supreme reality and in return is psychically transported from the mundane world into the subtle realm of the goddess.

The deity's *Yantra* and *Mantra* are closely interwoven. *Bija* (*Shiva*) and *Bindu* (*Shakti*) make *Nada* (Subtle Sound) at the beginning of time. While the sacred center (*Bindu*) is the goddess, with *Bija* and *Nada* she represents the three sides of a triangle. Each has its separate existence but yet each cannot exist without the other two. Together they have all the *gunas*.

The *Nada* is said to be self-consciousness in human beings. Incantation of the deity's *Mantra* brings the realization of the cosmic consciousness into the initiate. By means of sound vibrations divinities exert their influence on their devotees.

Tulmul Naga and Its Attributes

The island temple of Tulmul of *Khir Bhavani* has allegorical meanings. The temple in which the goddess resides is the center (*Bindu*), the spiritual fountain of power. The surrounding water of the island is the ocean of infinite life energy full of dormant potentialities which spread, unfold, expand and transform into tangible reality. The goddess under the canopy is the precious stone that grants all desires. She is the energy of the center out of whom emerge the three worlds of heaven, atmosphere and earth.[15] Conceptually this architectural and pictorial arrangement, echoes the iconographic image of the Tantric goddess *Bhairavi Aghoreshwari*.

The goddess *Khir Bhavani* is referred to as *Jala-rupi*, 'having the form of water or serpent.' Her constant companions are snakes and serpents. In fact on the cover of the printed version of *Mahatmya* (fig. 13) her serpent-manifestation partly overlaps her water-form. The pen sketch shows a long serpent within the sacred waters of the odd-shaped Spring.

Khir Bhavani's water-form intensifies the local veneration for rivers, springs, lakes and ponds. Moreover, it underlines the idea that she dwells in the water and her body is the water. In her serpent form she is not only associated with numerous snakes (*Sl.* 33 & 38. First Rendering) and serpent gods such as *Nilanaga, Vasuki, Padmanaga* and *Taksaka* (Homage) but also signifies the latent power (*Kundalini Shakti*) in the body of *Sadhaka* which can be awakened by her devotion.

At the bottom and bottom-right of this pen sketch are drawn the Panchal mountains. All the villages and pilgrimage places such as Kapalmula, Vishnupad and Madhyagam, Divasthala and Khilvarini, Martand and Anantanaga, Lokutpur and Rayasthala, Vadipur and Kotipur, Chandipur and Tankarpur are carefully and correctly inscribed as described in the *Mahatmya*. She crosses the sacred sites while searching for an appropriate place for establishing herself. (*Sl.* 34–37 & 39–40, First Rendering) The drawing makes a topographical diagram of the valley of Kashmir and its vicinity. It symbolically suggests the protective aspect of the goddess by enclosing the names of the parts of the valley with the two forms of the goddess, her water and serpent forms. Thus it also sanctifies the valley.

The water and snake forms symbolize fertility and fecundity. Through her symbols the goddess *Khir Bhavani* expresses her protective and maternal qualities already praised in the

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15 See Heinrich Zimmer *Myths and Symbols in Art and Civilization*, (Ed. Joseph Campbell), Bollingen Series VI, Princeton University Press. 1972. pp.202–3.

Mahatmya. Every contact with the goddess in her water-form implies regeneration—a new birth. 'Water not only purifies and regenerates by giving new birth but it also nullifies the past and restores, even if only for a moment the integrity of the dawn of things.[16] The fertilizing and regenerating qualities of water underline her motherhood.

In the *Mahatmya* the goddess *Khir Bhavani* is described as having all the three *Gunas* (qualities or attributes) of *Tamas*, *Rajas* and *Sattvas*.[17] While residing in the Southern Island kingdom she is designated as *Tamasi*, the dark goddess *Shyama*. Her *Tamasi* quality is temporarily overlapped with the character of the goddess *Sita* (who is ambitious and passionate). For a little while angry and ambitious *Tamasi Shyama* becomes *Rajasi Sita*. The persona of *Sita* and *Shyama* is first superimposed but eventually separated. Finally, *Shyama* goes to Kashmir and dwells as *Sattvika Khir Bhavani* at the Tulmul Spring.

Khir Bhavani's persona changes from terrible to ambitious, from ambitious to peaceful as she ascends from the south to the north through the geographic landscape of India. The constant change in her qualities (*Gunas*) frustrate even *Bhairavi*. She asks her husband *Bhairava*, 'Who is she? Please tell me lord is she of *Tamas*, *Rajas or Sattvas* attributes, *Shiva?*' (*Sl*. 3, First Rendering) In the final analysis *Maharajni Khir Bhavani* is designated as the goddess having all the attributes, however her *Sattvika* qualities predominate.

The geographic journey of *Maharajni Khir Bhavani* also corresponds with the interior pilgrimage of a *Tantric Sadhaka*. According to Tantrics there are seven *chakras* or psychic energy centers in the body which have potential of raising consciousness. They are located in the human body from the base of the spine to the top of the cranium: *Muladhara* at the base of the spine, *Svadhisthana* near the generative organ, *Manipura* near the navel, *Anahata* near the heart, *Vishuddha* near the throat, and *Ajna* between the brows. At the crown of the head is the seventh *chakra*, *Sahasarara*. The *Tantric* devotee imagines the power as being asleep within him in the form of a coiled serpent (*Kundalini*) at the *Muladhara chakra*. *Sadhaka* through controlling his breathing carefully, arouses her. When she lifts her head she moves through the spiritual channel piercing through six centers.[18] The seventh *chakra* is located at the crown of the head. Here, *Shakti* in her serpent form is joined to *Shiva* in a union. The

16 Eliade: 1958 p.195.

17 Hindus believe that each individual has *Gunas* combined in various proportions. Different personalities reflect different proportions in which qualities or attributes are mixed. When *Gunas* are in equilibrium individual is at peace. The quality of *Sattvas* is characterized by brightness and lightness; transparency, joy and peace and principle of goodness. *Rajas* is characterized by activity; craving and passion and ambition and avarice. *Tamas* is the principle of darkness and inertness, dullness and delusion, dejection and degradation. Jaidev Singh; 1979, Introduction.

18 Out of the six centers the first three are from which the lives of most people are governed while the upper four represent higher modes of experience.

devotee imagines herself as having purified her body by suffusing all the lotuses with the awakened power.[19] The sleeping *Shakti* is awakened by means of *Yoga* and transferred through the *Susumna* in the spinal cord to the *Sahasrara*, where she unites with *Shiva*. The union of *Shiva* and *Shakti* produces the state of divine bliss. In her *Yantra*, *Maharajni* as the sacred center (*Bindu*) is equated with *Kundalini Shakti.*

In the *Mahatmya* two ideas are expressed at once: one, that the goddess *Khir Bhavani* imbibes in herself all the *Gunas* and that she is the latent serpent power. Two, that the *Sadhaka* may raise this very latent power in his consciousness by overcoming *Tamas* and *Rajas* qualities and rise to the level of *Sattvika* in order to reach a state of eternal peace. Thus the goddess's mythic journey from the south to the north as *Shyama-Sita-Khir Bhavani* and the psychic journey of her power from the *Muladhara Chakra* to the *Sahasarara Chakra* become paradigmatic of an individual's self-improvement, without and within.

The changing *Gunas* of the goddess, as described in the *Mahatmya*, are congruent with the changing colors of the sacred spring at Tulmul. The water of the Spring is considered to be the manifestation of the goddess *Khir Bhavani* herself. The believers say that the color changes and reflects the emotions and moods of the deity. During the peaceful times, they say, it is reported to be milky-white, rosy-pink, lemon yellow or gray-white but at the time of any political, economic or social disaster it turns dark in color. Although there is no unanimity in these observations, some Kashmiri historians as well as devotees have written about this change in the color of the water of *Khir Bhavani.*

W.R. Lawrence, writing in 1895, notes 'When I saw the great spring of *Khir Bhavani* at Tula Mula, the water had a violet tinge, but when famine or cholera is imminent the water assumes a black hue.'[20]

Aurel Stein, writing in 1900, informs the reader, 'The large spring of Tulamulya...is supposed to exhibit from time to time miraculous changes in the color of its water, which are ascribed to the manifestation of the goddess.'[21]

A Kashmiri devotee S.C. Koul writes, 'The water of the spring changes its color from time to time. I have observed and found it rosy-red, faint-rosy, light green, lemon yellow, milky white and gray-white on various occasions. There is no special time or definite period for this change in color. Any shade of black color is supposed to be inauspicious.'[22]

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19 For the further discussion on *Chakras* see Ajit Mookerjee, *Kundalini: The Arousal of the Inner Energy*, Clarion Books, Thames and Hudson Ltd, London. 1982.

20 W.R. Lawrence. p. 296.

21 Aurel Stein, 1900, p. 488.

22 S.C.Koul: 1954, p.14.

J. N. Sathu, Journalist for Kashmir Times and Daily Telegraph, London writes, 'As recently as 1947 R. K. Kak, a veteran Kashmiri journalist for the Statesman, The Civil and Military Gazette and Associated Press of America told me that he himself was a witness to the change in color at the time of a catastrophe'. Mr. Kak had told Mr. Sathu, "In 1947 I saw the color of the spring water change into black just before Pathan tribesmen from Pakistan invaded Kashmir and caused widespread destruction of life and property in this valley as in the Jammu region."[23]

Through the observations of the changing colors of the spring water, the goddess's attributes are seen as her personal emotions.[24] They vary from the sense of peace to the feeling of danger.[25] The changing colors are related with the three *Gunas* of the goddess. *Tamas*, *Rajas*, and *Sattvas* are linked with colors: black, gray or any dark hue with *Tamas*, red, orange yellow or warm color with *Rajas*, and white or light color as *Sattvas*. A devotional poem in honor of the goddess *Kali* attributed to the eighteenth century Bengali *Shakta* poet, Kamalakanta(?) illustrates this idea further:

Is Kali, my mother, really black?
The naked one, though black she seems
Lights the lotus of the heart
Men call her Black, but yet my mind
will not believe that she is so
Now she is white, now red now blue;
Now she appears as yellow too...

23 Personal correspondence.

24 The natural process of changing color is given a religious sanction by the devotees. To an outsider other factors could contribute to the change in color of the sacred spring. Varied colored flowers, dry fruits, sugar-cones, rice and milk pudding are poured into the spring by pilgrims each day. The composition of these ingredients varies on a given day. The variation of this composition would change the color of the water and subsequently make it dark. The religious belief that the color changes because of goddess's emotive responses may well be *post-facto*. The Spring has been cleaned four times since its construction. The most recent operation lasted from 30 January to 10 July, 1970 . The mire and sediment which lay at the bottom was removed. A large quantity of water flowed out making the Spring fresh and sparkling as is noted by S.C. Koul, p.21.

25 It is quite wide spread among Kashmiri people that the goddess expresses her wrath in several ways. Radha Krishna, a 74 years old Kashmiri Pandit said when he was a young boy he went to *Khir Bhavani* with his parents. While walking outside the periphery of the Sacred Spring, he urinated. Shortly thereafter he started having problems with his eyes. He was unable to see for six months. A *Yajna* was held at *Khir Bhavani* temple and a silver-eye was offered into the Spring. Soon, he could see again. According to a Kashmiri Muslim, Mohammed Ramazan, Muslims too feel that any desecration of *Khir Bhavani* would bring misery. Personal correspondence. J. N. Sathu, Journalist.

Such feelings and emotions are taken seriously by Kashmiri people. *Tantrism*, instead of suppressing emotions and responses treats them as powerful aids towards emancipation. Even the *Puja* offerings used in the ritual at *Khir Bhavani* temple consist of ingredients which arouse the five senses: flowers and incense arouse the sense of smell, light excites the sense of sight, sound of bells heightens the hearing, and ritual food excites the taste buds. Therefore for the goddess to express her emotions would be the most natural (*Tantric*) thing to do.

The *Maharajni Khir Bhavani* tradition claims that *all the faculties*—the senses, emotions and intellect—should be encouraged and roused, through the cultic paraphernalia, to their highest pitch and reconverted into the pure energy from which feelings, ideas, and memories originate. The perfect devotee encounters the intense human passions through which the divine latent power is experienced and the goal of self-realization is achieved.

Khir Bhavani's tradition reflects high regard for self-knowledge. A Tantric adept is constantly searching for who she is as an individual and what relationship exists between herself and the world in which she finds herself. In order to realize an answer she need not renunciate the world but experience it through the senses, emotions and intellect. This philosophical belief has affected Kashmiri Pandits who have high regard for learning and knowledge and who delight in worldly pleasures. The idea of spiritual mobility has resulted in their physical mobility whether during the times of political instability or peaceful times.

Khir Bhavani's *Yantra*, *Mantra*, and *Naga* uncover her links with *Tantrism*. This pattern is consistent with her *Mahatmya* and iconic images. Thus there is the conclusive evidence that *Khir Bhavani* is a *Tantric* goddess in a state of eternal bliss. In addition to being rooted in Kashmiri *Tantrism*, she is not only the protecting-nurturing mother and the goddess of knowledge and wisdom, actively participating in the affairs of the mundane world of the Kashmiris, but she is also a transcendent goddess who is enshrined in the island temple in the state of spiritual bliss.

conclusion

A Goddess is Born: Syncretic, Tantric and Peerless

Maharajni Khir Bhavani's historic context, sacred text, iconic representations, and cultic paraphernalia reveal three fundamental characteristics of the goddess. First, that *Khir Bhavani* has emerged only a century ago within the Kashmiri religious pantheon. She came forth in response to the local changes in political, social, and economic conditions of the Kashmiri people. Second, that the newly emerged goddess is a syncretic deity in whose cultus myths and symbols from Kashmiri *Shaivism, Vaishnavism* and local beliefs are appropriated. Third, that she is rooted in *Tantric* traditions. Her unique characteristics make her a peerless goddess who is firmly established in Kashmir valley and who reflects the ethos and the world view of the indigenous people.

Maharajni Khir Bhavani: A Newly Emerged Goddess

The appearance and tradition of *Khir Bhavani* reflects cultural modifications brought about in the valley of Kashmir due to political, economic and social changes. From the beginning of the third quarter of the nineteenth to the end of the first quarter of the twentieth century slow yet sweeping political and socio-economic changes took place in the lives of the inhabitants of the valley. The eighteenth century Afghan rulers were turbulent and fanatical kings who knew how to conquer but not how to conciliate. Under the Sikh rule the situation was no better. They were territorial and militaristic with little regard for the subjects of their conquered territory. With the establishment of the Dogra rule the condition of the people started to somewhat improve around the end of nineteenth century. The progress, however, was not entirely due to the reign of Dogri *Maharaja* but also because of the tireless work of the Christian Missionary Society of London and help from the British government in India. Improvements were made in almost all spheres of socio-economic life—medical, judicial, educational and land distribution. For the first time in centuries people had enough to eat without too much of exertion and adversity from the ruling class.

Kashmiris regained their physical and psychological strength, albeit gradually. This revolutionary change was expressed unconsciously but spontaneously through the emergence of the cultus of *Khir Bhavani*. Many verses in the sacred text, *Mahatmya*, sing praises for the changes brought about by the rule of the new empress (*Maharajani*) who has arrived in the middle of the present age 'in order to destroy all troubles' (*Sl.* 56-58, First Rendering), 'the one who grants the ideal kingdom (*Ramarajya*)...has made Satidesa (Kashmir) her abode now'

(*Sl.* 32 & 53 First Rendering). She is further described as the one who grants all wishes: sons, daughters, money, knowledge, and *moksa*. Her followers always get 'treasure, grain, animals, home and fields.' She 'eliminates terrible famine, devastating floods and fearful kings.' 'Sickness, disease and death can be escaped if the devotee meditates upon her' (*Sl.* 54–58, First Rendering). These expressions clearly reflect the sort of sufferings Kashmiris were going through before the changes for the betterment of the people were brought about. They also reflect hope for the future.

At the end of the nineteenth century, Kashmiri Pandits were not aware of the sacred symbols and icons of their traditions. The meanings of religious symbols and motifs had either been forgotten or become meaningless. This was partly due to the obscure nature of *Kashmiri Shaivism*, and partly due to behavior of the rulers whose religion was other than that of the local inhabitants. Through the goddess *Khir Bhavani*'s myths, *Mahatmyas* and representations, however, the ancient Kashmiri *Tantric* symbols and motifs were revitalized. Through her legends, myths and written scripture the tyrannical and unjust rule of Pathans and Sikhs was explained and justified in a way as to be comprehended by the Kashmiris. Also, the social and political values were revivified. The local ethos was externalized and in return the goddess reflected a world view which made Kashmiris proud.

Maharajni Khir Bhavani: A Syncretic Goddess

The local traditions of *Nagas* and *Pisachas*,[1] the ancient deities *Bhairava* and *Bhairavi*, the goddess *Durga/Kali*, and the *Vaishnava* deities *Rama, Sita, Hanuman*, together with a host of minor gods and goddesses arise from the literary and visual matrix of the *Khir Bhavani Mahatmya* and bring into being the syncretic cult of the goddess. Her paramount local manifestations are as water and serpent. In her legends she is designated as 'having-water-form' (*Jala-rupi*) and 'having-serpent-form' (*Naga-rupi*).

In the dreams of Tulmul *Brahmins* and in her legends and myths the goddess reflects the symbolism of water and serpent. Veneration of water and serpents is an ancient Hindu tradition, particularly in Kashmir where water sources abound. Whereas the purifying and fertilizing qualities of water are considered sacred, it is also significant for the economy of the valley with its rivers, canals, lakes and springs. Local people depend on water for cultivation, transportation, and dwelling. Crops are harvested on islands, fruit and flowers on floating gardens. All sorts of food and items of daily use are transported and sold from small *Shikara* boats. In addition, not only do common folks live cheaply in simple boats, tourists, who live in luxury boats contribute to the economy of the valley.

1 See Ved Kumari (Tr.) *Nilamata Purana* (c. 5th-6th C.E.) for the discussion of *Nagas* and *Rakshasas* or *Pisachas*, as divinities and as an ancient ruling tribe of Kashmir.

Serpents are associated with traditional *Shaivism*. They are symbols of death and rebirth. Their deadly bite is symbolic of inevitability of death but their character of shedding old skin and acquiring a new one is a metaphor for rebirth. Thus they symbolize regeneration and immortality. The goddess's association with serpents (*Sl*. 33, 31 & 34, First Rendering) links her to the supreme Kashmiri god *Shiva Bhairava* who himself is adorned by Nagas, and who in the *Mahatmya*, declares *Maharajni Khir Bhavani* as spiritually more powerful than *him* and gives her the mandate of protecting and guarding the Valley and its inhabitants.

Khir Bhavani incorporates the attributes of the goddess of learning and knowledge *Sharada* (Kashmiri form of the pan-Hindu goddess *Saraswati*). *Khir Bhavani* is eulogized as the goddess of learning and knowledge on the mundane level and the goddess of wisdom and enlightenment on the spiritual level. She values education and grants blessings for various examinations to all her devotees. The *Mahatmya* clearly notes that one is able to obtain knowledge with the blessings of the goddess. 'Those who desire knowledge she gives knowledge' (*Sl*. 54, First Rendering.).

Along with the goddesses as *Sharada, Durga/Kali* and *Tantric* elements, major *Vaishnava* deities *Rama*, *Sita*, *Hanuman* and *Ravana* are amalgamated into the cultus of the goddess. The cult of *Rama* is intertwined into her cult through the appropriation of local and epic myths. *Rama* himself is described as the devotee of the goddess *Khir Bhavani* in her form as *Shyama/Kali*. He is also designated as her husband when *Shyama*'s persona is overlapped with that of *Rama*'s wife *Sita*. At the command of *Rama* his devotee *Hanuman* takes her from the island of Lanka to the valley of Kashmir where she is established as *Maharajni Khir Bhavani*. The *dramatis personae* of the epic *Ramayana, Rama*, *Sita*, *Hanuman* and *Ravana* actively participate in ushering in *Khir Bhavani* into the valley. In her paintings she takes over some of the iconic elements of *Durga/Kali*.

Evidently in the amalgamated tradition of the goddess *Khir Bhavani* attempts are made to reconcile differing beliefs selectively and successfully. She is the supreme reality and the mediator between Kashmiri people. *Shiva Bhairava* gives her the mandate of guarding the people because she understands the ethos of the local people. In her cultic paraphernalia are appropriated religious symbols viable and meaningful only to the modern Kashmiris. On the telescopic level the goddess *Khir Bhavani* is syncretic in nature incorporating differing Hindu sects. On the microscopic level all the characters in her *Mahatmya* help explain and enhance the idea of individual's ascend towards spiritual perfection. *Ravana, Sita,* and *Hanuman* assist in understanding the gradual ascend from *Tamas* qualities to, *Rajas* and finally to *Sattvas*.

Khir Bhavani: A Tantric Goddess

The *Tantric* elements of *Yantra, Mantra* and *Naga* (Serpent or *Kundalini*) are weaved into the tradition of the goddess. The *Mahatmya* explicitly states that by reciting her *Mantra*, meditating on her *Yantra* and performing the ritual at her *Naga* the goddess' devotee can raise the latent power in her body and reach the stage of supreme bliss.

The demon king *Ravana*, an ardent devotee of *Shiva Bhairava*, is described as a wise *Yogi*. *Bhairava* commands *Ravana* to worship *Khir Bhavani* in her form as *Shyama/Kali* instead of *him* because she is more powerful than *Bhairava*. This acclaims the superiority of the goddess *Khir Bhavani* over *Bhairava*. Ravana is proficient in *Yantra* mediation, *Mantra* recitation, breath control but has not yet reached that stage of *Yogic sadhana* which demands control of the sexual drives and mind. His character is that of a man who has no control over his temptations. He abducts and wants to marry *Sita*, *Rama*'s wife. He is angry, conceited and rejoices in the destruction of men and gods. He is of *Tamasi* character.

As the myth develops the character of *Shyama/Kali* is introduced who hovers between *Tamasi* and *Rajasi*. When *Sita*'s persona is superimposed on that of *Shyama/Kali*, the latter takes over former's *Rajasi* nature. Although *Sita* is *Rajasi* in nature, she is in control of her passions. The goddess *Khir Bhavani* is *Tamasi* as *Shyama/Kali*, becomes *Rajasi* as *Sita* and eventually she becomes of *Sattvika* nature.

Hanuman the formost devotee of *Rama* brings the goddess from the island kingdom of Sri Lanka to the valley of Kashmir on his shoulders. This geographic journey from the south to the north of India symbolizes the psychical ascend of a *Sadhaka* from the state of *Tamas*, *Rajas* and *Sattvas*. Moreover, this geographic pilgrimage is congruent with the spiritual journey of a *Sadhaka* within his physical body who raises the latent power (*Kundalini Shakti*) situated at the base of the spinal chord (the south of the subtle-body) to the cranium at the top of the head (the north of the subtle-body).

While *Ravana* expresses the first stage in *Sadhaka*'s progress towards experiencing emancipation, *Sita/Shyama* reflects the second, and the immaculate *Hanuman*, the third stage. *Hanuman*'s figure expresses acquiring spiritual power through sexual renunciation.

Navjivan Rastogi explains that the concept of spiritual progression is the very life blood of Kashmiri *Tantrism*.[2] Through practice and discipline (*Sadhana*) an initiate is able to gradually unfold his latent potencies. Several stages have to be passed before one is able to attain perfect purity or clarity. In the *Mahatmya* the goddess *Khir Bhavani* herself symbolizes the paradigm of gradual spiritual progression. For *Tantrics* spiritual progress is possible for all human beings while leading their day to day lives. The discipline, learning and knowledge leads one toward wisdom and eventually toward enlightenment of the spiritual world.

The theme of significance which persistently engages our attention is that the local goddess *Khir Bhavani* is rooted in Kashmiri *Tantric* traditions (*Sl.* 11, Homage). In her *Mahatmya*, visual images and cultic paraphernalia *Tantric* associations are strongly indicated. Her cult expresses certain important social and religious values which are intuitively Kashmiri but are understood only by a few individuals.

2 See Navjivan Rastogi's "Introduction" in *The Krama Tantrism of Kashmir*, Vol. I, Motilal Banarasidass, Delhi. 1979.

Khir Bhavani and Kashmiri *Pandits*

Khir Bhavani's tradition reflects high regard for knowledge, delight in worldly life, and significance of physical mobility and spiritual advancement. This reflects in the behavior and life style of Kashmiri *Pandits*. They believe that worldly and spiritual progress can be made through education, mobility and gradual stages of self discipline. For Kashmiris the sacrality of human body, including senses and thought, is significant. Physical body is considered a meeting point between divinity and humanity. This kind of religious devotion was interiorized partly due to the foreign rule and partly due to the nature of the *Tantric* worship.

Since the thirteenth century the construction of elaborate temple structure was discouraged due to the Muslim rule. The long Mughal and Pathan, and also Sikh reign did not allow construction of monumental sacred buildings. *Puja* in home shrines (*Thokur Kuth*) became common. The *Tantric* devotee, through the contemplation of *Yantra* and recitation of *Mantra*, invited the deity to reside in her heart as the guest. The devotee's body itself was the temple. Even during a century of *Vaishnava* Dogri rule, the Kashmiri *Tantric* attitude resulted in the construction of only temples of modest size. Dogri kings themselves prefer elaborate temple structures as is evident from the lavish temple complexes of Jammu.

In *Tantrism* human body is considered to be one of the most powerful instruments of spiritual transformation through which one can experience divinity. The gulf between human and divine disappears in the body of the worshiper. The sacredness of the body extends into the sacredness of the power of the senses and the significance of basic human drives. In other words, the mundane and the spiritual are recognized as equally real. The physical reality is considered as real as the spiritual reality. Enjoyment of worldly things, *Bhoga* and spiritual emancipation, *Moksha* are given equal weight.

At the Tulmul temple pilgrims do not suppress their emotions, instead they treat them as powerful aids towards worship.[3] Even though, devotees must not eat meat when visiting the temple, they certainly enjoy some of the best vegetarian preparations, like *Khir* (milk and rice pudding), *Halwa* (semolina and sugar pudding), *Lucci* (Deep-fried bread) and *Monja-Anchar* (*Kohlrabi* pickle). These delicacies are lavishly enjoyed in the temple precinct, which is surrounded by *Chinar* and Elm trees. Here families get together for summer picnics. *Khir Bhavani* appeals to the senses and arouses emotions and responses. At her temple the *Bhoga* of good food and all the senses is lavished upon.

3 A typical ritual of worship (*puja*) at the temple of *Khir Bhavani* includes: Lighting of earthenware lamps associated with the sense of sight, fragrant leaves and flowers associated with the sense of smell, dry fruit and rock candy with the sense of taste, and the recitation of *mantras* with the sense of hearing. The sense of touch is awakened when a worshiper touches various parts of her body during the ritual. The *puja* is geared towards awakening one's inner consciousness by outer stimulation.

Kashmiris believe that women as well as men can make spiritual progress through discipline, knowledge and self-effort. This again is the influence of *Tantric* teachings in which any sex, caste or race differences are purged. In the *Mahatmya* the goddess *Khir Bhavani* herself symbolizes the paradigm of gradual spiritual progression. Her self-realization that she was leading a *Tamasi* life as *Shyama/Kali* awakens her and prompts her to move to a new location, where she becomes of *Sattvika* form. She is the goddess who blesses those who, irrespective of their gender, want to acquire knowledge and elevate their spiritual status through discipline. She is paradigmatic of unsurpassable wisdom through realization, self-effort, and continuous meditation.

Some Concluding Remarks

Lawrence Babb working in Madhya Pradesh (*The Divine Hierarchy*:1975) and David Shulman in *Chinai* (*Tamil Temple Myths*: 1980)[4] have concluded that in Hinduism the virgin/unmarried goddesses are violent and destructive and it is only when they are controlled and subdued by male gods through marriage that they are tamed, become benign, auspicious and grant-bestowing goddesses.

The two scholars describe virgin goddesses as those who possess uncontrollable destructive power which is erotic in nature. They claim that Hindu goddesses are either controlled through matrimonial bonds which transform them into benevolent and benign goddesses or they keep their virginity by causing the death of the god by the conjugal embrace.

Babb notes that the 'discernible emotion of the goddess is anger—black, implacable and blood thirsty'. He goes on to say that in her 'unmarried' manifestations she receives blood sacrifice which matches her combative and blood thirsty nature. But when she marries she undergoes a kind of transformation. She becomes a loving wife, a benevolent goddess, a giver of wealth and progeny, and an 'exemplar' of passive devotion to her husband. An appetite for conflict and destruction is thus transformed into the most fundamental of social virtues, that of wifely submission.

David Shulman concludes that an unmarried goddess's sexual power belongs to the realm of chaos and death. The power of a virgin goddess is the epitome of violent power and must be contained by the strongest bonds i.e. marriage.

> ...In marrying her the god exposes himself to an intense, even lethal danger. Moreover, it is essential, for the good of her devotees, that the goddess remain powerful— or, in other words, that she remain a virgin. Faced with this demand, wedded to an incarnation of violent power, the god inevitably succumbs and dies in her embrace.[5]

4 See David Shulman's *Tamil Temple Myths*, Princeton University Press, 1980. p.141 and Babb Lawrence's *Divine Hierarchy: Popular Hinduism in Central India*, Columbia University Press, New York, 1975.

5 Shulman. p.141.

The goddesses which Babb and Shulman describe are virgin goddesses who possess uncontrollable destructive power which is erotic in nature. In both cases the goddesses are either controlled through matrimonial bonds, which transforms them into benevolent and benign married goddesses or they keep their virginity intact by causing the death of the god by a conjugal embrace.

Following Babb and Shulman, the goddess scholar, David Kinsley argues that such a portrayal of the goddesses reinforces social norms by suggesting that it is necessary for women to marry and express their sexuality in "safe ways and under male supervision and authority of the male god who is seen as a civilizing presence as alone goddesses and women are perceived as dangerous."[6]

The model of the virgin goddess *Maharajni Khir Bhavani* of Kashmir is different from the one described by Babb, Shulman and Kinsley. As *Shyama* she decided to control her violent power and became the *Sattvika* goddess neither because a male god tamed her nor because a god died in her embrace but because she channelized her sexual powers through the discipline of *Kundalini Yoga*.[7] *Khir Bhavani* cannot be described as an epitome of seductive menacing force. Her power is neither limited nor sealed. She raised herself from the stage of darkness to the level of enlightenment by self-effort, discipline and self-enlightenment.

The virgin goddess who dwells at Tulmul temple is neither married nor tamed by a god and yet she is a benevolent deity. Granted, she was once of *Tamasi guna* but through her determination she transformed herself into a *Sattvika* goddess. She became the grant-bestowing, benevolent, and spiritually enlightened deity by channeling her passion and aggressive powers. Her hagiography is paradigmatic for all Kashmiris, female and male. Her sacred story suggests that spiritual emancipation is possible through self-effort and discipline for all human beings.

Khir Bhavani reflects the ethos and worldview of the Kashmiri people who have experienced different and unique historical circumstances. Their local ecology, geography, beliefs and cultural values are expressed through the goddess *Khir Bhavani*. She is embedded in the valley and belongs to her people.

The uniqueness of *Khir Bhavani* informs us that the pan-Indian goddesses are best understood by studying, analyzing and interpreting the local female deities and their related texts, images, rituals and beliefs and then comparing them with local deities of other regions.

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6 Kinsley, David. Ibid. p.203

7 *Kularnava Tantra* asserts that following *Tantric* rituals is as difficult as walking on the edge of a sword and as risky as holding a lion by the ear. The ritual ingredients (grain, fish, meat, wine, and sexual partner) are to be used not for the satisfaction of the sensuous desires but for the realization of the highest spiritual value. When the ingredients are producing their highest effect on the physical organism the initiate is to draw his mind completely from the senses and to concentrate on the spiritual joy as completely dissociated from the sensuous element (Pandey: 1963, p.559–560)

Although there is an underlying stratum of cultural consensus in *Shakta/Tantric* goddesses, the uniqueness of local manifestations is significant. Each Indian geographic/linguistic region has its own peculiarities. The peculiarity of each regional group in India cannot be universalized. Each linguistic/geographic group of Hindus has it own oddities, its own cultural ethos and world view. Attention must be paid to the uniqueness of the local deities before a general statement is made about Hindus. The critical and careful consideration of the local Kashmiri goddess *Khir Bhavani*, the social, political and religious milieu and her cultic paraphernalia provides evidence which enlightens scholars about her and the Kashmiri *Pandits* in ways which cannot be accomplished by any other method.

Maharajni Khir Bhavani's emergence was a powerful and poignant collective creation of Kashmiri *Pandits*. Her hagiography expressed *Pandit* community's collective biography. Their deeply felt emotions and thoughts were externalized in the cultus of the new goddess. They created the goddess through sacred words and iconic images. What the community felt at the subliminal level was expressed into the symbolic imagery in text and form. From a distance of almost a century we can understand the mystery of her appearance. Only an intense historic moment can act as a catalyst and result in the emergence of such a complex sacred symbol. We can say that creation of a goddess is like making of a work of art in which deeply felt experiences get embedded in the consciousness of a community and are eventually externalized as an artwork. A freely actualized unique deity appears who is grounded in the uniqueness of the local people.

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glossary

- **Aghoreshwari** : A Kashmiri Shaiva goddess belonging to Bhairava tradition. Also known as Tripurasundari. She is believed to have all the qualities (*Gunas*): *Tamas, Rajas and Sattvas.*
- **Asana** : Posture of icons which establishes balance and poise. The word also means a seat.
- **Bhakti** : Devotion. Uniting with god through sharing in his divinity. Through the mutual sharing of devotion the self expands toward the infinite and the infinite is brought within the self.
- **Bhairava Svachchhananda** : Terrible form of *Shiva*.
- **Bhairavi Aghoreshwari** : Terrible form of *Shakti*.
- **Chakrapuja** : Literally 'Circle-worship'. The ritual of union, performed collectively by a group of Tantric initiates. The rite is also known as 'Pancha-makara'.
- **Darshana** : Viewing of a deity by a devotee. A significant part of worship in which not only does a devotee look at the deity but is in return 'seen' by her and thus blessed.
- **Guna** : Quality of the phenomenal world (*Prakriti*). It collectively constitutes truth, purity and goodness (*Sattva*), energy and passion (*Rajas*) and darkness and sloth (*Tamas*). Together they are basis of every aspect of phenomenal existence. *Purusha* or Ultimate reality (*Brahman*) is said to be devoid of *Gunas* (*Nirguna*).
- **Hanuman** : Deity of sexual renunciation and physical might, *Hanuman* is considered the supreme devotee of *Rama* and general of his army.
- **Icon** : A sacred image the specifics of which have been standardized.
- **Kali(ka)** : The Goddess in her fearsome form usually depicted as a dark-skinned image, with a lolling tongue, wearing a garland of human skulls and a girdle of human hands.
- **Lalleshwari** : Tantric/mystic poetess of Kashmir, (b.1320). Affectionately known as *Lalla Ded* and *Lalla Moj*.
- **Linga** : A term used for the abstract phallic representation of the god *Shiva* as the primordial male element of nature (*Purusha*).

- **Maharajni** : Khir Bhavani Tutelary goddess of many Kashmiri Pandits whose temple is located in the village of Tulmul in Srinagar, Kashmir.
- **Mahatmya** : A genre of Epic and Pauranic literature that extols the greatness and power of a deity, her or his rituals and pilgrimage place.
- **Mudras** : Symbolic hand gestures which were adopted in visual arts from traditional *Natya* (dance/drama), meditation and ritual.
- **Naga** : Mythological water spirits is the forms of serpents that inhabit rivers, lakes, and oceans. They are believed to have both protective as well as destructive qualities.
- **Puja** : A form of worship in which the devotee treats the deity as a honorable guest. It is a hospitality ritual in which the ingredients of worship include food, fruit, flowers, water, light and incense.
- **Purana** : Ancient Sanskrit texts which include myths legends, and rituals available to the members of all Hindu castes in contrast to the Vedic texts which were accessible only to the three upper caste males.
- **Rajas** : One of the three qualities of *Prakriti*. It denotes activity and passion.
- **Rama** : The ninth incarnation of Vishnu who has become the Hindu model for a King, son, brother and husband.
- **Ramayana** : The shorter of the two Sanskrit epics. Attributed to Valmiki. It narrates *Rama*'s search for his wife *Sita* who is abducted by the demon *Ravana* and in the process exemplifying what it is to be an ideal king, son, brother, husband and wife.
- **Rupa Bhavani** : (1624–1720) A follower of Lalleshwari.
- **Sadhaka** : A disciplined spiritual aspirant, the seeker, an initiate.
- **Saraswati** : The ancient river goddess now worshipped as the goddess of arts, music, literature and education. In Kashmir she is known as Sharada.
- **Sattvas** : One of the three attributes (*gunas*) of *Prakriti*. It reflects truth, tranquillity and purity.
- **Sita** : The daughter of the earth mother *Prithvi* and wife of Rama. The model spouse goddess considered paradigmatic for ideal Hindu wives.
- **Sharada** : Kashmiri script derived from Sanskrit. Also personified as the goddess of learning, an indigenous form of the goddess Saraswati.
- **Sharika** : Kashmiri manifestation of *Durga Mahishasurmardini*. Her temple is located on Sharika hill (Haer Parbat) in Srinagar, Kashmir.

- **Shakta** : Pertaining to goddess Shakti; a devotee of the goddess. Shaktas worship goddess as supreme reality.
- **Shakti** : Creative energy or power that generates and activates the universe. Shakti is conceptualized as a goddess. At times she is personified as a dynamic independent goddess and at other times the equal half of Shiva in his androgenous form.
- **Shiva** : Auspicious, the name given to fearful god Shiva in the hope that he will be gracious to his devotees.
- **Tantra** : A heterodox religion in which devotee visualizes herself as a deity. It involves esoteric sexual rituals and worship of the goddesses, divine beings and women.
- **Vahana** : Vehicle of the divine beings.
- **Vishnu** : One of the three gods of Hindu trinity: Vishnu, Shiva, and Shakti.

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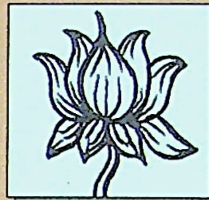
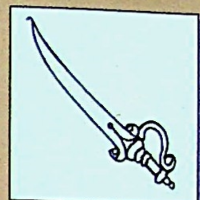
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